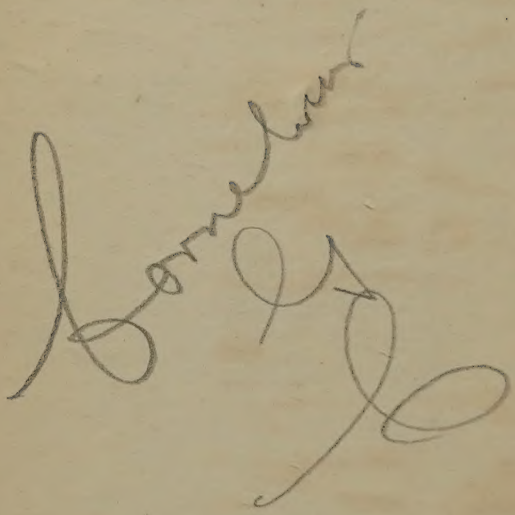
ON THE ROAD IN HOLLAND



ON THE ROAD IN HOLLAND

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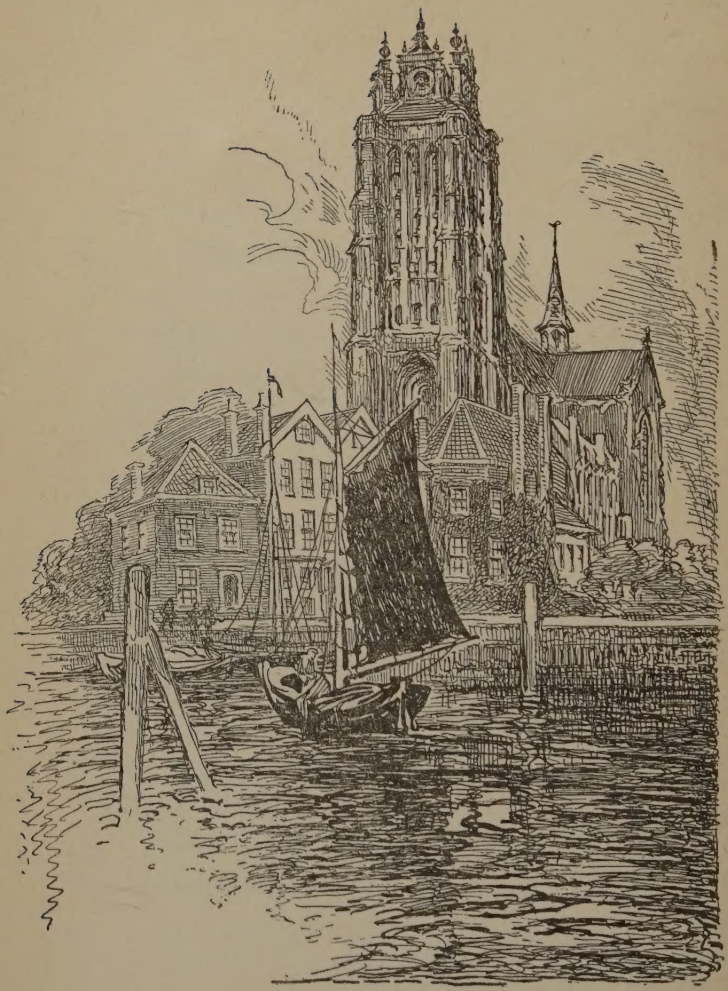

DORDRECHT.

[*Frontispiece.*

ON THE ROAD IN HOLLAND

NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS IN THE QUAINT COUNTRY OF DYKES AND CANALS

BY

CHARLES G. HARPER

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION

To visit Holland is, for the stranger to that country, to be interested and amused all day and every day. Everything is strange and beside one's usual experiences. The scenery for the most part is nothing, for almost the entire country, outside the provinces of Drenthe and Gelderland, is formed by the sand and mud brought down during uncounted ages from the Continent of Europe by the Rhine and other rivers, and it is therefore level. And not merely level, but well below the level of the sea and the rivers, and it is saved from inundation only by a long series of elaborate dykes maintained by that special Government Department, the "Waterstaat." There is not a stone in the country except those imported for the few "macadam" roads, the buildings that exceptionally are in stone instead of the usual brick, and the almost continuous apron of black basalt stones from Norway with which mile after mile of the sea-defences are revetted, where the sand-dunes do not of themselves form a natural protection.

But if Holland's scenery be tame, its buildings, public and private, are extremely often roman-

tically beautiful ; and even in the modern small houses and workmen's dwellings there is exhibited a good deal of that ingenuity and resource in the use of brick which might fairly have been expected in a people so thoroughly used to that material. Brick, indeed, paves most of Holland's roads—bricks red, yellow, blue, grey, called by the Dutch " klinkers," set up on their sides. Given a good foundation, there is no better road either to look at or to travel on. It is dustless, easily cleaned, and as easily repaired. These roads are often bordered by canals (the Dutch term canals " grachten "), and generally run between an avenue of trees, with what we ought to have in England—a special path on one side or the other for cyclists (" Rijwielpad ").

Long ago, in that centralising process which has converted the States-General of the Dutch Republic into the Kingdom of Holland, the throbbing life of the little Dutch towns was drained away to contribute towards the making of modern Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Some few other ancient towns of Holland exhibit an increase in modern times, but they are special instances—such as Haarlem, the highly prosperous centre of the bulb industry, a region of floriculturists, and The Hague, the social and Court centre of the country. At Leeuwarden, too, up in the north, in Friesland, that centre of the cattle trade, there is expansion, and a garden-suburb in the

interests of the working-class population is now in the making as a municipal enterprise. And a highly interesting and educative sight it is, too.

No, it will not do to think of Holland as a land where everyone is old-world and most people wear weird costumes, but, on the other hand, to deny the existence of them, except as a lure to tourists, as some of the Dutch do, is an absurdity, as you may go and see for yourself.

The untravelled Englishman's idea of Holland as a country where the people in general wear outlandish costumes and walk in wooden shoes—is not altogether correct. Some do, in the rustic parts ; but even in the smaller provincial towns the Dutch girls—the " meisjes," that is to say, the " missies "—are often as up-to-date as any London flapper, and wear as neat shoes and stockings—and just as abbreviated pocket-handkerchief skirts ; and they (the girls, not the skirts), are not infrequently very pretty. They grow, it is true, what we think to be more typically Dutch ; solid, and with thick ankles.

Town and country are in these respects far more diverse in Holland than in England. In the country, wooden shoes, " klompen," are commonly worn, but they must be put off on entering a house, almost as religiously as the faithful must remove their footgear in Mohammedan countries on entering a mosque. Thus

a usual sight outside Dutch cottages is the family row of klompen outside the front doors.

A strange feature to tourists in this country is the little light that almost invariably may be seen, at any hour of the day, through the windows of the front room of almost any kind of house, as you pass by. It may be white, red, green, or any colour. You wonder at it, and speculate what it can be. You know the Dutch are generally not Roman Catholics ; and it is therefore not likely they have little lighted religious shrines in their houses. When you become acquainted with Dutch domestic interiors the mystery is revealed. The little lights are, in fact, coffee and tea lights. As the Dutch drink coffee, and what they call " thee," all day, they like to have the water aways on, or near, the boil ; and those mystic illuminations are produced by night-lights, in a small coloured-glass table fitment for that purpose.

It is not the object to follow in these pages the political history of the country. It is ruled at this day by the House of Orange-Nassau, descendants of that William of Orange, " William the Silent," who rescued the country from the Spanish power in 1581, and was slain in 1584, at Delft, by the hand of a Spanish assassin. The motto everywhere seen in Holland beneath the Royal arms, *Je maintiendrai*, is a portion of his own declaration, *Je maintiendrai piété et justice.*

That House of Nassau has by no means experienced an equable history, but it has survived, although several times menaced with extinction, notably in the reign of William the Third, who died in 1890, leaving a daughter of a second marriage, the Princess, Wilhelmina, born in 1880, the present Queen of Holland. At one time in his reign, after the death of his son, the Prince of Orange (satirically called by the French in Paris, where he was too well known as "Citron"), who died of evil courses, there was no heir. Indeed, if Royal houses were maintained on the same theory as private families, it could be said that with Queen Wilhelmina the House of Nassau would end. She married in 1901, a German, Prince Henry, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and the sole heir to the crown is the Princess Juliana, born 1909.

ON THE ROAD IN HOLLAND

I

THERE are several ways of entering Holland; by the Hook from Harwich, and so through Schiedam by train to Rotterdam; by Flushing from Folkestone; or by Harlingen in the north, sailing from Brewer's Quay by the Tower of London. Each way has, of course, its special recommendation, according to the needs and fancies of the tourist; but the best introduction to this toast-and-water land of dykes and islands and canals is by Flushing—or, as the Dutch themselves write that place-name, "Vlissinghen."

It is the best way in the sense of giving you an entrance to Holland in its most characteristic part; the province of Zeeland, which, as its name would imply, has ever belonged more to the sea than to the land. The heraldic arms of this province eloquently allude to this amphibious character, displaying a lion swimming, with the motto, "Luctor et Emergo"; that is, "I struggle and emerge." Lions, heraldically, bear

themselves in all sorts of ways on the shields of arms in Holland ; from the Royal arms of Nassau, to the heraldry of the provinces, down to the old armorial coats of ancient Dutch families ; but a swimming lion is a prime curiosity. Everywhere is the "leeuw"—the lion, that Dutch word coming evidently from the Latin "leo" ; and apparently the town of Leeuwarden, away north in Friesland, has the like association.

From the natural-history point of view, lions would seem the unlikeliest kind of beast ever to have been found in the Netherlands ; and in point of fact there never were any. But if the lion has been adopted as a cognisance to typify high courage, then it is not amiss, for no people has ever risen superior to inimical circumstances more thoroughly than the Dutch. They have had to war continually with the elements, even to maintain a land to live in ; and in later centuries, when they had successfully shut out the sea, they found themselves obliged to fight against foreign aggression, time and again, to keep that which they had created. The Dutch, essentially a God-fearing people, will yet say proudly, and not impiously, that God made the world, but they made Holland. It is in many respects true. It has taken them about two thousand years to do it, and the job is not yet completed. In the nature of things and the Dutch plodding, tenacious, not easily defeated and acquisitive

character, it never will be completed while there remains a chance to reclaim drowned lands, or to convert shallow seas into fertile polders.

No, not lions, but dykes, canals and storks are the chief rural features of Holland. That cynical and witty eighteenth-century Frenchman, Voltaire, who had taken offence at something said to him in Leyden, in quitting Holland described it as a country of "canaux, canards, canaille"; canals, wild-duck (or alternatively lying rumours), and blackguards. Bating the canaille, and allowing for the allurement of alliteration, which is as infectious as a yawn (so infectious, indeed, that I perceive myself to have already—as above—taken the malady in the act of alluding to it), Voltaire exactly touched off the superficialities of the Low Countries.

Well, then; we enter Holland from Flushing, at the mouth of the Scheldt. What they call "Flemish Zeeland" is first seen on the right; a low coast-line, a tree or so, a distant church-tower. Flushing is the chief, if not indeed the only, seaport of that fatal, ague-stricken island of Walcheren on which a British army rotted in 1809. The Walcheren expedition, undertaken against Napoleon, who had made himself master of Holland, had for its object the capture of the French batteries on the Scheldt. Flushing was cannonaded and taken, and it was intended to capture Antwerp; but disease so reduced the

strength of the force employed that the enterprise was abandoned. In December only the wreck of an army returned, after some six months' inglorious delays and futilities. The expedition, had its commander, the Earl of Chatham, elder brother of the Prime Minister, not been a procrastinating General, politically appointed, would easily have taken Antwerp. How fresh it all seems, and new; and new also the subsequent promotion of that discredited soldier. Familiar, too, the controversy that followed, as to who was responsible for the delays and the consequent failure; Chatham, or his second-in-command:—

"Great Chatham, with his sabre drawn
Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan
Sir Richard, wanting to be at 'em,
Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

That was the way the wags of that time put it; ending by the deadly gibe of referring to that dilatory commander as "the late Earl of Chatham."

Thus was Walcheren the grave of many a British soldier.

That does not seem a prepossessing picture of this front-door into a country we are to visit; but much has changed in the century or so since, and it is difficult to realise that an isle so smiling as Walcheren now is, under the summer

sun, could have been once the grave of so many thousands, through climatic conditions.

But the exact geographical circumstances of Walcheren will explain much of that tragic affair. It is, of all the coastwise lands, and of the islands off the coast, the one which lies lowest, and where by consequence the protecting dykes are higher than elsewhere. Adjoining are North and South Beveland and upwards towards the mouths of the Maas and the Rhine are Schouwen, Zierikzee, Duiveland and Tholen ; Over Flakkee, and a number of semi-islanded regions. All these are essentially the ultimate alluvial deposits of those considerable rivers, flowing down from Germany. They were once mud-banks ; the obstinate, indefatigable Dutch have embanked them and made them what they are. More remotely, almost all the rest of Holland has the like origin. It is the washings of the continent of Europe. In fact, Napoleon, who wanted an excuse for annexing it, and realised these facts, used them as a pretext. He argued, ingeniously enough, that as the land of Holland had been brought down from the continent, in solution, by those rivers, that country did in fact belong by right to those parts of Europe which he had conquered ; and that (pursuing the thing to a logical conclusion) as he was master of those provinces, so Holland ought to be his. And as there was no one strong enough at the time to resist,

the country became annexed in 1810 to France during the next four years.

The Hague is the Court and Society centre of Holland. All around that fine crowded town are woodlands ; an unusual feature in this country. And, in addition, they are very English-looking and park-like woods, with many fine and stately country residences. With the Dutch, " The Hague " is generally written " S. Gravenhage," which means literally, " the Count's hedge," or enclosure. The French style it " La Haye," and the Dutch themselves have the alternative " Den Haag." Our own village of Hayes, in Middlesex, takes its name from the same root. It is, or was in Saxon times " Hesa," the hedge, meaning in that case an enclosed and cultivated part of the surrounding heath or wild land.

The name " S. Gravenhage," is an instance of what seems to English people the grotesque Dutch way of placing the possessive apostrophe at the beginning, and not at the end of a word, as we would do ; or in this case in the middle. Thus, we should write " Graven'shage." It is in Dutch as though, for example, " Queen's Road " were written " 'S. Queen Road " ; which, as Euclid would say, is absurd ; or at any rate, looks so.

In its every circumstance The Hague looks the courtly cosmopolitan place it is. The town is full of fine hotels and government buildings.

I noticed here, more especially than anywhere else in Holland, that hard white glaring sunlight which is more or less general in the country; but that of course was more a personal observation than a particular feature of the place.

Tourists in Holland will not find it a cheap country. The chief reason appears to be that the unit of expenditure is not, as it is with us anything like the shilling; or like the Belgian or French franc, or the German mark. The Dutch unit is a coin worth one shilling and eightpence, and variously called a "florin," a "guelder," or a "gulden." The consequence is that the prices of most articles are exactly in proportion. If we take such an article of common everyday consumption as a cup of coffee—for the Dutch, at home, or out-of-doors drink coffee all day long—we find that at the wayside inns, and in the cafés in the towns the standard price of a cup of coffee (and that rather a small cup) is the equivalent of fivepence, as against threepence in England. Nor shall we find it to be exceptionally good coffee, either. The same rule as to prices holds good for hotel tariffs; and indeed for everything.

The smaller coins are puzzling, and, to the Englishman, used to big pennies and half-pennies, are ridiculously and inconveniently small; those of the lesser values being so small that they are easily lost. Their relative values easily escape

a stranger, especially if he happens to be one who has travelled in Belgium and France and in America, where the respective values of a Dutch cent, an American cent, and French and Belgian centimes are, in ordinary daily affairs very confusing. The florin, guelder, or gulden is divided into one hundred cents. Ten cents are therefore equivalent to twopence—in current Dutch talk a "dubbeltje"—and not, as might rashly be supposed to ten centimes, which are worth rather less than one penny; while of course ten American cents are fivepence. One's expenditure in Holland is therefore always a surprise of the wrong sort.

It might be thought from the foregoing that Holland is a wealthy country. That is not so. Although it is a dear country for living, giving the presumption that the cost of everything is based on the ability to pay high charges, it is not really a rich country. Yet you see here no such signs of abject poverty as will be abundantly evident in lands notoriously wealthy. There is not among the Dutch that striking contrast between the wealthy and the humble folk which is familiar elsewhere. If the peasants be, indeed, poor, they do not wear the aspect of poverty. Only in the very few large business towns do you see anything like a slum.

The official classes live on salaries that in England would seem impossibly low. Work-

houses are conspicuously absent. It has every look of a contented country. Discontent you will find in the great towns; Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and where industrialism flourishes; but it is not conspicuous elsewhere.

Prominent features in all the towns are the "Oudemannen" and "Oudevrouwen huizen." They are old men's and old women's almshouses, and for the most part they are themselves old and beautiful and dignified. In the same category are the many "Weeshuizen," or orphanages, generally to be distinguished by the quaint old-world figures of a boy and girl on the frontage.

Finally, Holland will be found the completest change from the ordinary round of foreign travel. There the ancient ways and things remain less altered than elsewhere. It is the last refuge of the picturesque in the affairs of every day.

II

Flushing need not long detain us, for its position as a port, with docks and quays, and the comings and goings of shipping render it more cosmopolitan than very characteristically Dutch. But in four miles, when you have come to Middelburg, you will have entered upon something as completely Dutch as anything in Holland. It is a

town completely surrounded by water and by the remains of the ancient "bulwarken," or ramparts, that once defended it. Within that

THE ZEELAND HEAD-DRESS.

circuit of water and defensible walls the older part of the town is contained within a completely circular street which under different names,

encloses most of the places best worth seeing. Here, for the first time you see the Dutchmen who owe little to any contact with other countries ; those tall, lean men in dark clothes with great silver buckles at their waists, and bobbed hair under peaked caps ; their faces invariably clean-shaven, and generally with strong aquiline features. They look almost Roman. There is nothing of the Franz Hals jolly drinking fellows, with round figures and round faces, about them. As a type, that sort, and the similar Teniers kind, is extinct. They are grave and serious and undemonstrative ; and they look eminently reliable. They are almost the only features in Middelburg that are not round. " Goed rond, goed Zeuwsch," goes the old local saying ! " Well rounded, good Zeelandish " ; so, by simple induction, we might suppose those sinewy and not well-larded men not to be properly representative, were it not that we may shrewdly suspect that saying to have a special application to the feminine population.

At any rate, they are, without a doubt of it, round, splendidly-eupeptic ; looking the picture of health. Walcheren has evidently changed for the better, since a British army was reduced by its climate fifty per cent. little more than a century ago. Here, for the first time you notice, what you will observe all over Holland, the constant type of strong-framed woman,

placid-looking and healthy, with a singularly Madonna-like countenance.

Of course, the younger women do not exhibit that rotundity to so almost an invariable degree as their elders ; some of the girls, in their curious costumes and extraordinary head-dresses, look extremely charming. There is a variety of head-dress for almost every district, even in Walcheren ; but the rest of the dress varies but little. It is remarkable for the apron over the dark skirt, for the exceedingly tight black velvet bodice, with short sleeves just as tight, ending well above the elbows, in all seasons of the year. The arms accordingly become very red ; but the more nearly they resemble raw beef, the more they are admired. There are few who do not wear tightly round the neck a necklace of coral beads, in sometimes as many as eight rows.

But it is the head-dress which is, after all, the chief feature. It is generally a lace cap over a gold band worn just above the forehead. On either side of the band a gold wire, twisted like the tendrils of the vine, or perhaps like a corkscrew, comes down on the cheek ; or alternatively a gold plate, like a little mirror, takes its place. So, many of the girls and women go about their daily vocations in Middelburg with what are in effect blinkers on their cheeks. If they aspire to be exceptionally smart, they will

add all sorts of jewellery on to this astonishing confection.

The market-place of Middelburg is just outside the circular road enclosing the centre of the town.

THE TOWN HALL, MIDDELBURG.

Here is the great and lovely Town Hall, built in the early years of the sixteenth century, with rich and lofty tower and elaborate frontage of

late Gothic windows ; fretted tabernacles between them filled with statues of the ancient Counts and Countesses of Zeeland and Holland. Above them rises the steep-pitched roof, with its three tiers of dormer windows.

Added to the array of twenty-five historical personages in the canopied tabernacles, you will find now the present Queen of Holland, with the Princess Juliana in her arms. The statue was placed there in 1910. The princess, future Queen Regnant of Holland, is named after her famous ancestress, the Countess Juliana, mother of William the Silent, maker of the independence of Holland in the sixteenth century. She, too, looks down from her niche among the lawgivers and the rulers, whose rule and law-giving was based on that foundation of all domination, the sword. Figuratively, but not less actually for that, it remains the one stand-by at this day, in the last resort, although it is artillery, and not the sword-blade, that is the arbiter.

The Countess Jacqueline was not less fierce than they. She married thrice, warred and was eventually beaten, and died not much older than thirty. Amid all those ancient wars and cruelties and upheavals of the times in which she lived, and later, there yet arose these supremely beautiful works of architecture, which none of these later more settled and civilised ages can do more than admire and imitate.

I like that name, "Jacqueline," but the Dutch usually call her "Jacoba." Although her statue looks from its tabernacle across the square, her home was at Ter Goes (pronounced "Ter Hoose"), on the adjacent island of South Beveland.

Zeeland is exceptionally the grain-growing province of the country, as the tourist along the roads will perceive; but it would scarce be suspected in the market-place itself, where butter and eggs and cheese, and pigs seem to be the chief products offered.

But the Abdij, or Abbey, Square is the most ancient, as it is also the central part of Middelburg. Centuries have passed since the Abbey buildings echoed to the chantings of monks. Here are yet the cloisters, secluded within the three gloomy gates, and the Council Hall and the other domestic buildings of that disestablished religious house; but it is the home now of the Provincial Council of Zeeland; and the noble Council Chamber is perhaps the finest meeting-place of any provincial Parliament in Europe.

The Abbey church survives, as the Nieuwe Kerk. You cannot help noticing that, because the spire of it is prominent, it rises not far short of three hundred feet. Apart from its tower and spire, the Nieuwe Kerk is nothing; nothing in the sense of interest, though it is of considerable measurement; for, like most of

the Protestant Churches in Holland—the "Herformde Kerk," the "Reformed Church"—the interior has been pretty well swept of ancient things, and whitewashed to a dazzling whiteness.

In fact, it is the great belfry-tower aforesaid that occupies most attention. The Middelburgers personify it, and call it "Lange Jan"; and do the same by the Town Hall (or Stadhuis) tower which is familiarly "De Gekke Betje," or "Foolish Betsy."

Long John and Foolish Betsy do not get their names from any pre-occupation of the citizens in their architecture but from local amusement at their respective clocks and bells. John, with his carillon of forty-one bells playing elf-like tinkling tunes, eight times in every hour, is ever in advance; and Betsy comes always, hesitatingly afterwards. It is a memorable experience to hear the Abbey chimes playing the old "Sea-Beggars' Song: In Nam van Orange maak opn de deur."

If we wish to find the Dutch sea-defences at their mightiest, it is at The Helder, away north, or here, on the island of Walcheren, that the sight of heroic works, and the unceasing labours of the Waterstaat, is to be had. Better here, however; because The Helder, a district and town of naval and military interest only, is not by any means picturesque.

It is about ten miles from Middelburg to West

Kapelle, where the greatest sea-dykes in Holland will be found. Except for them, Walcheren would be drowned. We have to understand that in this country all the rivers, in the course of centuries, with the never-ceasing embankments along them inland, as well as along the coast, and with the continual bringing down of silt from the continent in their currents, run at a height actually above the level of the land. Moreover, what are now the broad estuaries of the Maas, the Scheldt, and the Rhine, are the products of art, and are not natural. They were originally one vast sandy and muddy delta ; and all these now prosperous islands were non-existent. They would cease to exist, were it not for the Waterstaat, the most important Government department in Holland. At West Kapelle, a great earthen bank, faced on the seaward side with stone, and further reinforced with wooden piles, with brushwood plaited in between them, is the chief feature. There are always men at work on it ; and windmill-pumps are for ever pumping out the surface water. Anyone with a passion for economics might well seek to know in the history of all this creative enterprise and never-ending work of vigilance, if as a fact, it has been worth while ; whether the cost has been recouped by the productiveness of the land thus created.

There is, it must be remembered, always the

dark thought at the remote back of these people's minds that, just as the country has already several times been inundated, so it might be again. We see that thought materialised here in the ancient earthen mounds not far inland, heaped up so long ago that no date can be given to the making of them ; mounds, now crested with trees, which were provided by the inhabitants as places of refuge in the last resort, when homes and cattle and lands had been obliterated by the breaking-in of the waters. They do not build such refuges now ; they have confidence in the Waterstaat, whose engineers are indeed the inheritors of ages of technical experience.

III

THREE miles and a half from Middelburg in the opposite direction from West Kapelle, is Veere.

Veere is a decayed seaport of equal interest. It was the ancient rival of Middelburg, but now is a mere ghost of its former self. " Veere " means " ferry," and the name of it is pronounced very like that of the English word. It looks across to the island of North Beveland. Both Middelburg and Veere keenly sought to attract traders from overseas in times when such foreign merchants were burdened with all manner of

restrictions. Scottish business men were established in Middelburg in the sixteenth century. Their "staple" was situated in that town, and they were forbidden to trade elsewhere. If their vessels were found in other ports, both ships and goods might be confiscated when caught. In spite of this penalty, they did trade to other places; and Veere encouraged them by offering substantial inducements. Chief among these was the undertaking that, if attacked and plundered by pirates, Veere would, at her own costs and charges, seize the pirates and recover the goods. The choir of that vast and stately church which now we see in neglect was placed at the disposal of those Scottish merchants and might be used as their burial-place; and they could have their own resident chaplain, who would be provided by the town with free wine and beer. In 1612 Veere found them a new church, with manse and churchyard, and an inn, to be used exclusively by the Scots; the liquors sold at the inn to be free of excise dues. And so Veere prospered, until, in 1725, when all Netherland dues were reduced and the town could no longer offer exceptional inducements. By 1795 the Scottish community here had been reduced to almost nothing, and to-day the only vestiges of its former existence are the old inn, now called the "Campveersche Toren," by the harbour, and the "Scots' House," where the staple was situated. It dates from

the end of the sixteenth century, and is, exceptionally, built of stone. The square window-heads, surmounted by elaborate floriated canopies, have to English observers the look of later in-

THE "SCOTS" HOUSE, VEERE.

sertions, replacing pointed windows ; but that is not the case. This combination, curious to us, was a Dutch architectural convention frequently to be seen.

I do not share to the full the admiration generally expressed for the tower of Veere's stadhuis, built about 1470. It is too thin and attenuated by comparison with its height. The facade is, however, in some respects the superior of that of Middelburg's greater building. From their niches still look down the statues of the olden lords and ladies of Veere, who, themselves considerable personages, ruled a considerable place. They have, now that they look upon a ghostly village, a far more sentimental interest than they could ever before have commanded. I like, by the way, my casual choice of that past imperative. They command no longer, for their kind has vanished. I do not know much about them ; whether they were beneficent autocrats, or, growing used to autocracy, became in time spoiled and tyrannical. But they have in their neglect that appeal residing in all neglected things. Only a few objects remain in Veere to tell of the great days, but among them is a very magnificent relic indeed—the golden standing cup—if you like romantic names, you will call it a "goblet"—presented in the sixteenth century to Veere by its first Marquis, the lavish Maximilian of Burgundy. It is elaborately ornamented with chasings and enamellings, and is a very precious thing indeed ; so precious that from time to time suggestions have been made that it should be given up by Veere and placed in the more

certain custody of the Rijks Museum at Amsterdam. But Veere passionately and rightly, as I think, will not have that. For what is the essential difference, after all, between having an object stolen and relinquishing it into the care of such a mausoleum of artistic objects as a museum, local or elsewhere, especially elsewhere? Insidious suggestions have been made for an electrotype copy to be taken, and for Veere to have that; the original to be taken away. "It will be just as good to look at," is the suggestion; but Veere will not have that, either. I respect and applaud this sturdy rightness of view; a rightness so extremely rare in these times that places have become largely despoiled of the interesting things proper to them, for the benefit of private collectors or to be set apart and labelled as specimens in galleries. Of course, there is a third resort. If the artistic interest of Maximilian's cup is so great that national or other collections cannot very well do without it, an electrotype copy, being "just as good," will do equally as well for those who desire it.

The poor old church, vastly impending over all the island, has long been in a very bad way. Napoleon barracked his troops in it, but even before then it was dilapidated. Flitter-mouses, or bats, and owls live within; the tower has lost its upper stages and is crested with a curious-looking cupola which has the effect of enormously

emphasising the scale of the great building, but some small works of reparation are in progress. Very small. So might ants seek to repair an ark.

IV

From Walcheren I came by way of Arnemuiden across into the island of South Beveland. I met on the way a group of girls with enormous white lace winged head-dresses. They gave me glances not in the least such as you get in England, where, when eye meets eye, it shifts away uneasily, as though caught in a misdemeanour. I recognise, well enough, that though they were curious and amusing to me, I was not less strange and amusing and curious to them. So it was a fair exchange of entertainment. Had it not been for those glances, I might have thought from their head-gear that they were nuns who had thought better of the life of seclusion and had burst their bonds, to see what the world was like. But I should have been very wrong—for not only were these girls farmers' daughters of Arnemuiden, but they were Protestant girls. The great sweeping wings of the head-dress proclaimed them such to those who knew. The Roman Catholics wear a smaller and more severe style. At Arnemuiden I bethought me of a

cup of coffee, after the manner of Holland ; and sat down to contemplate the strange things of this strange land. And the girl who brought it, seeing that I must be a foreigner, since I said only " coffee," and spread on the table Dutch coins for her to take what she would, tried English on me ; for they all know well enough when you are a Briton. But I think if she had spoken Dutch I should have understood it better ; although I do not speak the language. For that is the quality of the road-side English you get here, when indeed you get any at all.

Failing in this attempt, she moved an arm benignantly over the landscape, and said " Mooi." I thought she was referring to the cows there, and imitating their " moo " voices. So I nodded, and drank my coffee and went away. I have since discovered that when you want to declare that anything in Holland is beautiful, you must make a noise like a cow : " mooi."

And so to Ter Goes ; or as already said " Ter Hoose " ; for " G " usually becomes " H " at the beginning of a word. We have in England the uncommon personal name of " Goose." It is of Dutch origin, and derives from this place.

From Goes I took the train to Bergen-op-Zoom, thus quitting the province of Zeeland, and coming to the mainland and into Brabant. I will confess that I hastened to this town by the lure of its name ! " Bergen-op-Zoom " has a fine resonant

thunderous sound at the end of it. But Bergen's name is more interesting than the place. There is a queer old gate remaining of the demolished fortifications—the " Gevangen Poort " it is called, the " Prison Gate " ; but for the rest, although the town has a long history of sieges and captures and repulses, ending so recently as 1814, it is stale and flat. So I left it, without knowing even to this day what the " Zoom " in the place-name means. I thought, looking upon the map, I would go to Breda ; for there was once a " Peace of Breda," a treaty signed there ; and Charles the Second spent some time at Breda, during his exile.

It is twenty miles from Bergen-op-Zoom to Breda, through Wouw, with the humorous name, Rosendaal, with the pretty one, and Etten. It is extremely uninteresting country, and Wouw, although not of itself particularly enticing, becomes by contrast a place of an immense interest. It has some features ; the road has none. Rosendaal is the frontier customs-station on this road. A good many British sailors and marines know it well enough, for in October, 1914, they streamed in some thousands across the frontier, from Antwerp, some twelve miles away, on the fall of that city ; and were received and interned by the Dutch authorities, chiefly at Groningen, in the north of Friesland, for the duration of the Great War. Escaped prisoners of war and refugees

of all kinds owe much to the kindliness and help of the Dutch in those years.

The uninteresting country all around Breda made me think the historical bait of that place to be a sort of trap to lure the unsuspecting stranger into a sandy, stale, flat and unprofitable land where he should perish of boredom. It is a sparsely settled region of rose-growers and general nursery-gardeners. What they call, across that near-by border into French-speaking Belgium, by the name of " Pepinieristes."

From afar off the tall tower of the great and noble church stands out against the sky on these levels. It stands by the market-place near the centre of this town of 28,000 inhabitants ; and is almost the only building of interest in it. Unlike most of the churches in Holland, the tower is of stone, and is more restrained in design than any other. The tower is not unlike the tower of Utrecht Cathedral and the Church of St. Martin at Groningen. It is late Gothic, in the style we should in England describe as Perpendicular, with very strongly-marked vertical lines. The exterior of the body of the church is not quite so good, being by comparison thin, and the stone throughout is a bleached and haggard limestone. The finest object within is the beautiful and original monument to Count Engelbert the Second, of Nassau, who died in 1504. Tomaso Vincidor, an Italian from Bologna, designed it, about

BREDA.

seventeen years later. Alabaster recumbent effigies of the count and his wife Cimburgis rest on a sarcophagus, and the count's armour and equipment are displayed on a black marble slab, supported at a height of over four feet from the floor on the shoulders of four kneeling figures representing those martial characters of classic history: Regulus, Cæsar, Hannibal and Philip of Macedon. The work is not only in itself beautiful, but is of an additional interest because it directly inspired the like monument to Sir Francis Vere in Westminster Abbey. Vere in the time of Queen Elizabeth was in command of an expedition into the Netherlands, and won the battle of Nieuport, in what is now Belgium. He died in 1609; and, as the monument to Count Engelbert here at Breda had already been in existence some ninety years, it was probably seen and admired either by Vere or his friends, and thought to be a fitting design for his own monument. Nor is it one whit inferior, whoever may have been the sculptor. The figures in this case, supporting the black marble slab are four knights.

A third similar monument exists, with the like inspiration; although again differing in detail. This is that to Robert Earl of Salisbury, in Hatfield church. He died in 1612, after building Hatfield House; three years only after Sir Francis Vere, and there can be no doubt this monument

is by the same hand as that at Westminster. In this case, the recumbent robed figure of the earl is on the marble slab, which is supported by figures representing Fortitude, Justice, Prudence and Temperance. Beneath, in the true spirit of the Renaissance is a repulsive, though marvellously-executed effigy of a skeleton.

The parallels and divergencies of these three remarkable monuments form extremely interesting comparisons.

There is an interesting renaissance font, in copper, in Breda church, of interest even more by reason of the history attached to it than to its workmanship. William the Third, King of England and Elector of Holland, Prince of Orange, gave to any infant baptised at it the right of a citizen of London. This franchise was granted at the time when an English garrison occupied Breda ; but whether it survives or not I have no information.

V

Breda is a quiet and greatly modernised place, perhaps on the whole more French in general effect than Dutch. The Peace of Breda, signed in 1667, bringing to a conclusion the naval war between England and Holland, in which we

suffered great humiliations at the hands of the enterprising Dutch admirals, seems to have descended upon Breda itself. We were humiliated, as usual, by incompetents, but also, as usual, we emerged with the spoils. The technique by which these wonderful and contradictory results emerge from failure would be well worth study by a philosophic historian.

Seven years before this peace, Charles the Second, grown tired of residing in Holland as a pensioner on the bounty of all who would lend or give him money, seeing how public opinion in England was grown tired of the Commonwealth, issued here his "Declaration" of how good he would be if he were suffered to return. He was taken on trust, and duly returned to England in May, 1660.

The earlier story of Breda is one that finds parallels in most of the towns in Holland. It is the story of Spanish oppression and the Dutch passion for liberty. In 1566 the "Compromise" of Breda began the revolt against Spain. Eleven years later the Dutch captured it, and four years later yet, the Spanish had it again. In March, 1590, Prince Maurice recaptured the town by a stratagem suggested to him by one Adrian van Bergen, a bargeman, who was accustomed to supply the Spanish garrison with peat, conveyed in his barge. The idea was to hide soldiers under a cover of peat, and so convey

them secretly into the fortress. Meanwhile, the Prince, with a military force, was to wait on events outside the castle. The barge was duly laden, and placed in charge of Captain de Heraugiere. The plan nearly failed, because of the bitter cold of the March night, which brought on a bout of coughing under the peats, but the bargemen created noises which concealed the coughs ; and the garrison were duly surprised and slain, the fortress-gates were opened, and the anxious Prince and his men, waiting without, were admitted.

It was a kind of warfare carried on in compartments, so to speak. The good townsfolk of Breda were apparently not intimately concerned in this surprise. As we read it, it is an affair of mere handsful of men, who appear casually, kill a few soldiers by a childish stratagem, and carry on until an enemy force, after a long interval, comes and turns them out. Captain de Heraugiere was made Governor of Breda, and the famous barge was installed in the castle, and there it remained for thirty-five years, when Breda was besieged by the Spanish under Spinola. This was a full-dress affair, and the town was concerned in it very bitterly for ten months, when it surrendered. Spinola's first care was to burn that ironical barge. Twelve years later, the Dutch again took Breda, and kept it. But in 1793 and finally in 1813 there were other excursions and alarums.

To-day, Breda has a small garrison, housed in the barracks built by William the Third on the site of the castle. Part of the moat and a water-gate are left. From near by, on the quays, the best view of the church-tower, with the Waag, or Weigh-house, in the foreground is to be had.

Some ten miles bring us out of this rather modernised and quietly-prosperous Breda to the crossing of the Moerdijk, on the way to Rotterdam. The road is infinitely commonplace, but well-laid. In fact, it is very astonishingly good and broad; and if we like to explore south-west of Breda for a little while instead of at once proceeding north, we shall find that road continuing to be super-excellent. I invite you to examine it. It is the road to Antwerp, twenty-eight miles distant, and it comes in about ten of those miles to the Belgian frontier, at Wuestwezel. If you like to continue exploring into Belgium, it will be found that on the Belgian side, too, it is just as good. Being, in fact, relaid most carefully since the war, in finely-worked granite setts, it is even better than on the Dutch side. As, the further you go in Belgium, the worse the roads, and as the same remark applies to a great part of the way on the Dutch side, to Rotterdam, these remarkable stretches of highway, not greatly affected by traffic, require a little explanation. That may be found, readily enough. They are, if not exactly military roads, placed in that condition for the purpose of the Dutch and the Belgians, who are

not very amiably disposed towards one another, to be the better able to fly at each other's throats, at a moment's notice, when the time comes.

Meanwhile, the cyclist who rides along them blesses their comfort, and thinks it were well if ordinary needs were as well-considered as those possible eventualities.

So we proceed to Moerdijk, the name alike of a village and that broad arm of the sea which has to be crossed by steamer to Willemsdorp. The channel is the Hollandsch Diep, one mile and a half wide. Away to the right is seen a great railway bridge of fourteen spans.

Willemsdorp is just a ferry-slip, two or three cottages, and the Waterloo inn. The seven miles on to Dordrecht are good, brick-paved road, running between an avenue of trees, with the Dortsche Kil, a navigable channel, just visible on the left. It is a lonely road, with only the little "Half Weg" restaurant midway, where I sought to quench with a long, long glass of grenadine and a straw a consuming thirst. Here we are in the province of South Holland.

VI

DORDRECHT is more commonly called "Dort." It squatters in the water; the broad navigable channels of the Merwede, the old Maas and the Dortsche Kil;

while docks and canals everywhere intersect the town, a considerable one, of 46,000 inhabitants. Dordrecht is an effect of a wan greyness, even though most of its houses are of brick, a good deal of it red. It is a sort of northern Venice, for here many of the ancient houses along the canals have their feet actually in the water ; rising from it directly, and not, as more usually is the case, with quays and footpaths in front. The greyness of Dordrecht is not merely an effect of colour ; it is that also of circumstances, for it has not its olden prosperity. The shipping trade on which it grew up demands far more elbow-room in these times of large and increasingly greater vessels than the town can offer. Rotterdam is the heir of Dort, an heir who long ago came into his inheritance. That happened, indeed, so long since as 1618, on a matter quite apart from the respective abilities to accommodate big ships. Up to that time Dordrecht held a very valuable privilege ; that of being the sole port at which wines, corn and all manner of goods might be entered by this and the neighbouring rivers. Rotterdam three hundred years ago ravished away that monopoly.

So Dort, although in its own way a busy enough place, is a place with a past, quite out of accord with the present. It does well to look grey ; and all the bright colours with which its window-boxes of flowers here and there are painted, and its parti-coloured shutters, and the grass-green and post-office scarlet lines painted on the barges on

the Merwede do but accentuate the grey background.

It is a town of great historic interest, in national and religious affairs, and it takes cognisance of other people's business as well, as we may see in the Zuid Afrikaansch Museum. Perhaps Dort had better have left those matters alone. But an Englishman may find some amusement in the collections there. Of course it was part of Boer propaganda; or rather, a kind of *in memoriam* of the Boer Republics, for the Museum was opened only in 1902, a year after the Krüger corrupt oligarchy was finally abolished. That anyone should seek to preserve President Krüger's greasy old clothes would seem to indicate that he requires the attention of a specialist; but here they are, with busts of himself and President Steyn; articles made by Boer prisoners of war, Kruger's Bible, and numerous offensive caricatures of that period directed against Great Britain, inspired, doubtless, by Dr. Leyds and Boer gold, working upon Dutch sensibilities. As we have seen, the Hollander passionately desires freedom; and he may be counted upon to take the part of the "little one," no matter how perverse that one. He is too cautious to take that part actively, but philosophically only. And so we were in very bad odour in Holland during that South African trouble. Alike the responsible papers and the reptile press were insulting. The reptilia made much money out of it, too. We can perhaps excuse most of all

this, because, after all, the Boers are Dutch—those among them who are not by descent French Huguenots—and thus sympathy was natural. How nearly the relationship was recognised you may perceive by this among those propaganda publications; I will leave you to puzzle out the whole meaning of its title! "Op: Van Transvaal, Weekblad verschignende tijdens den onafhandelijk-soorlog der oud-Hollandsche Republieken in Zuid Afrika."

It is rather much, is it not?

In most towns of Holland the tall gabled houses lean very much out of the perpendicular; in Dordrecht perhaps more than elsewhere. That is because, like the similar old leaning houses of Amsterdam, they are built on timber piles. The story that they were built to lean forward, so that foot-passengers should be able to escape the water spouting from their roofs in rain-storms will not bear examination. We are often confronted with groups of houses that lean all ways, often towards one another as if instinctively for mutual support; which is in fact the result, even though it be an accidental one.

For the rest, Dordrecht does not change. We may very well note that, not only in the few modern buildings to be seen, but in a picture of the town painted by Albert Cuyp, a native, born 1605, died 1691. The work is now in the Ryks Museum at Amsterdam. It represents Dordrecht as seen across

the Old Maas, from Zwijndrecht. It is to-day precisely as it is in the painting.

We leave the town past the great church that comes in the middle of Cuyp's picture; the church of "Onze Lieve Vrouw"; that is to say, the Virgin Mary. I cannot pretend that I like that great clumsy pile of brick and stone crannied with age like a cliff tunnelled by martins, and squalidly patched; or that I can admire the bulky brick tower that rears its 230 feet of height in so loutish a way over everything, and looks, for all its height, as though the over-ambitious builders were obliged to cease their labours before completion. It would perhaps be less unhappy-looking if the great clock faces, one on each of the four sides, perched on the roof against the sky-line, as though the builders had absent-mindedly left it there, were taken down and conveniently lost. But there it has been these three hundred years or so, precisely the same, as we see by the evidence of Cuyp.

Past the church, by the old houses of the Blaauw Poort, we come to the steam-ferry. It is the chief approach to and exit from the town, and yet it all looks as casual and rustic as the leaving or entering a village.

Zwijndrecht is an out-at-elbows village, leading on to Rotterdam by eleven miles of as altogether abominable and accursed road as will be found in Holland. It is, it is true, a brick-paved road for the most part, but it has foundered into holes in some

places and in others has reared into humps; and sand completes for the cyclist the disabilities of holes and ridges. The stranger who cycles this way is unfortunate, but if he does it again, he is a fool; the more especially as there is absolutely no interest on the way; the only feature being the endless flat sandy fields devoted to the growing of strawberries.

Wise men and knowledgeable persons go between Dort and Rotterdam by steamer; and that being so, there is no local incentive to make this execrable road good. Besides, Rotterdam despises Dort, anyway; and Dort, with its ancient grudge, wants nothing to do with its big neighbour.

It is a sheer mistake for the tourist into Holland to come into Rotterdam. If he enters the country by the Harwich and Hook of Holland service, he must of course be taken into this great commercial town and port, with its heavy traffic and cosmopolitan trade; its great business houses, railway-bridges, crowded streets, and all those other things incidental to a place of 425,000 inhabitants, almost the largest in the country. He can see that sort of thing, any day he likes, in London or twenty or thirty other great cities in England. In touring, this is just the kind of place he does not want to get involved with. But, entering Holland by the Hook, you entrain there and are taken past unlovely industrial Schiedam into Rotterdam.

I shall not readily forget that dismay and sinking of the heart with which, after emerging from the

sands and rugged hummocks of that road from Dort I came, as a lone cyclist into Delfshaven, which is a suburb of Rotterdam, on the hither side of the Maas, which is an alias for the Rhine. Hopeful, would-be expanding suburbs of great cities are just the same, all the world over. Broad roads with tramways, carcases of houses unfinished as yet because the builders of them have so liberally anticipated the future, and the future being coy at these advances, has refused to respond to expectations. Playful eddying winds have a game at aerial maelstroms with scraps of newspaper (there always are, and always will be winds and loose scraps of printed matter in such places); and dehumanised blocks of model dwellings. That is Delfshaven. One would rather the heart of the crowded city itself than all this.

So across the great Maas Bridge, into the noisy crowding, striving town, and by what-named quays I know not; only I know the fearful cobble-stones and rugged setts of them. Anyone who wants Rotterdam can have it, for me.

Tom Hood wrote well of Rotterdam, nearly a century ago. I gather, by some of the lines in his verses, that it has altered rather for the worse since then. But the line,

"A sort of vulgar Venice,"

is one absolutely right:—

" Before me lie dark waters
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep;
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am;
Yes, yes, you are in England,
And I'm in Rotterdam.

" Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line.
And masts of spicy vessels
From western Surinam,
All tell me you're in England,
But I'm in Rotterdam."

I forget how many " Wilhelmina " quays and buildings and other objects I passed on my way through Rotterdam; but they were a good many. It is an entirely loyal feeling that confers the name; but, like our own " Victoria " railway stations, streets, embankments, public halls, and so forth, it is a loyalty that rather over-reaches itself and becomes a stale familiarity.

VII

DELFT is reached in nine miles from Rotterdam, along a road gradually improving in surface, but nothing to make any stir about. Delft, to an Englishman perhaps, if it conveys any idea at all, gives him thoughts of old blue and white earthenware. But to a Hollander, Delft means William the Silent, Prince of Orange, who gave independence to the Dutch nation in 1581, and was assassinated here three years later.

Few ever consider that word, "Orange," which to-day has several implications; and there are probably very few who have explored the origins of the Princes of Orange or know where their principality was. It was neither Dutch nor German, but it was in the South of France. Indeed, the town of Orange is there yet, with its 11,000 inhabitants, in the department of Vaucluse, not far from Avignon. It is a region of Roman remains, and Orange was in its origin Roman, and named *Arausio*. The name "Orange" seems a somewhat difficult descent from the Roman place-name; but it is well-ascertained. The colour, "orange," is another matter, and derives the name from the Latin for the fruit, *citrus aurantium*, the golden citron. Oddly enough, the Dutch do not style it an "orange." Oranges in Holland are "sinasappeln"; a curious word which means literally "Messina apples," apparently

from the first oranges imported into Holland having come from Messina, in the South of Italy.

How the title of Prince of Orange came into the Nassau family is a curious history, only briefly to be told in these pages, which are not intended to form an historical work. The family of Nassau are by origin German, and they became owners of a French district only by cousinship to the last of the French princes of Orange, Réné, who was slain at the siege of St. Dizier, in 1544. He bequeathed his lands to William of Nassau, who was a German by his father's and mother's side. This William of Nassau-Orange, a Hessian through his mother, succeeded to his father's estates in the Belgian Netherlands, and married the Countess Juliana of Stolberg, who, as already noted in these pages, was the mother of "William the Silent," maker of Dutch independence, whose tomb we see here in Delft.

The reigning Royal House of the Netherlands have, clearly, the historical sense to the full, and cling to it; for the present Princess Juliana is named from the mother of the liberator; and the title of "Prince of Orange" has always been maintained, although when William, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the Netherlands, and King of England died childless in 1702, the French King, Louis the Fourteenth, extinguished the Principality of Orange and escheated the estates. Thus the self-styled "Princes of Orange," generally the title used by

the eldest sons of the Kings of Holland, have since 1702 borne only a shadowy, though historically imposing, dignity.

Our Dutch King of England, William the Third, was great-grandson of William the Silent, and was, so to speak, also William the Third in Holland. The great Liberator's direct line ended with him. The present Queen of Holland is descended from Albertina Agnes, daughter of his son, Frederick Henry, by his fourth wife.

"William the Silent," Prince of Orange, was born in 1532, a Roman Catholic. Up to that time, and until some years later, the Netherlands had never been independent. They were Duchies and Principalities and the great tracts of country under the rule of Prince-Bishops. These personages, all-powerful locally, were yet themselves subservient to great overlords, such as Charlemagne and later Emperors of Germany. Whole countries, and groups of countries peopled by entirely different races, passed in those times by the marriages of Emperors from family to family, without the consent of their peoples. The necessity for any such consent was not then thought of. In this manner the Netherlands came in 1447 to Maximilian, Emperor of Germany. His grandson, Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany and King of Spain in right of his mother, Johanna of Castile, abdicated in favour of his son, the infamous Philip the Second, in 1555, after having lost his German dominions. Philip was solely a Spanish-

speaking monarch, but by blood rather more of a Hapsburg; with that Hapsburg peculiarity of the projecting lower jaw which we see in so many portraits of that family, and is represented in the present King Alfonso of Spain.

He is that Philip of Spain who married Mary, Queen of England, in 1554, and who in 1588 designed to conquer England with his futile "Invincible Armada." It is not historically correct that Philip began the persecution of the Protestants in the Netherlands. That had long been proceeding under his father; who, however, had not found it successful. His method had been to persecute them with the aid of their own Catholic countrymen. Philip, resolved to be more thorough, alike in political and religious matters, re-established the Inquisition and sought to rule the Netherlands by Spanish officials. Designing himself to reside in Spain, he left Holland, and appointed Margaret, Duchess of Parma, an illegitimate daughter of his father's, Regent. On his departure the States-General, or Provincial Councils, requested him to withdraw his Spanish troops.

The position of William of Orange, then but twenty-six years of age, was a singular one. A Catholic and a protégé of Charles the Fifth, Philip had appointed him Stadtholder of the provinces of Friesland, Utrecht, Zeeland and Holland. It was chiefly the great increase of the bishoprics soon determined upon with the object of more completely

hunting down heretics, that began the cleavage between William of Orange and the King of Spain; and it was rather the question of the additional expenses thus thrust upon the States-General than any other consideration that caused it. The ancient charters of the land forbade these arbitrary measures; and William's mind at that time was occupied with this legal aspect. But the King of Spain, in leaving Flushing in 1559, the last time that ever he saw the Prince of Orange, refused to believe the Prince's explanation that these were the States-General's objections. He snatched at his wrist and exclaimed passionately, "*No los Estados; vos, vos!*":— "Not the State's; you, you!" He affected to believe that the Prince was intriguing to serve his own personal ambitions.

Meanwhile, the cruelties of the Inquisition continued; and persecution was secretly arranged between Philip of Spain and Henry the Second, King of France, to culminate in a grand and complete massacre of Protestants of every rank, irrespective of persons, in France and the Netherlands. This thorough-going project, which was at once to destroy heresy and political opposition, was incautiously divulged by the French King to the Prince of Orange at a hunting party. Murder on the grand scale like financial roguery, if sufficiently large, has ever been considered less criminal than mere petty larceny and individual assassination; and the King of France could not for a moment have supposed

that this coup would have horrified so almost royal a personage as the Catholic Prince of Orange ; who was, however, astounded at the enormity of it.

But although horror-stricken, he said no word and displayed no emotion. Thus he has earned the name in history of "William the Silent." It identifies him above all the Williams in history—and there are a great number of them ; but at the same time it presents a mental picture of a man who was of a reserved and taciturn nature ; completely unlike this then gay and lavish and amiable Prince. On his return to the Netherlands he privately warned the members of the States-General of what was maturing. Matters dragged on. The plotters were not hastening to their great achievement. Meanwhile, the silent one had established a secret service which found access to all the King of Spain's most private and confidential doings. That was an extraordinary age of eaves-droppers and secret agents, in all countries ; the age of the Renaissance. The great Cecil in the service of Queen Elizabeth, was occupied all his life in England, in directing the activities of spies and in employing conspirators.

In 1566 the representations of the States-General to the Duchess of Parma, declaring that the religious persecutions should cease, were contemptuously rejected by her advisers ; who regarded it as impossible she should be afraid of those "water-beggars." The insulting phrase was taken as a challenge, and the "Water Beggars" became the cherished title of

the political and religious insurgents, who began to destroy superstitious images and to defy a repressive government. The Regent quailed before that storm, but the King of Spain despatched to the Netherlands the Duke of Alva's army, which was to commit atrocities that made even the earlier merciless regime appear mild.

VIII

The Prince of Orange fled into exile. The Water Beggars, being of a race accustomed to the sea, were, although few in number, more formidable than the Duke of Alva's ten thousand alien soldiers. Desperation had made them formidable. They secured a fleet of more than twenty small vessels, and appeared off the mouth of the Maas, at Brielle, often styled "Brill." Although not much more than four hundred in number, they captured that fortified seaport, in the name of the Prince of Orange, who, abjuring the Roman Catholic religion, accepted the leadership.

Thus was the historic position of William the Silent consolidated. No need henceforward for silence; he was become the declared patriot. Flushing followed Brielle. Its people, encouraged by the news, expelled the small Spanish garrison; but at that moment there appeared a Spanish fleet with

reinforcements, and, had it not been for one of those humorous interludes which history, like an accomplished playwright, introduces amid tragedy, the rebellion might well have ended there. While the panic-stricken folk of Flushing would have been lost, a drunken fellow in sheer tipsy bravado fired a cannon ; and the Spanish ships, the panic now theirs, departed hurriedly.

There was at that moment in the town an Italian engineer named Pacciotti, called by the Spaniards " Pacheco ", in the employ of the Duke of Alva. He had just completed the fortifications of Antwerp for the King of Spain, and was awaiting further instructions. His doom instantly was sealed. They hanged him forthwith, in spite of his entreaties to spare his life, for in the fierce temper of those times none on either side would consider anything so absurd—but at least to kill him, like a gentleman, with the sword. So much did it matter to people in that age. So hanged he was, on the ramparts.

For years the King of Spain pursued William of Orange with an unrelenting hatred. A standing offer of 25,000 golden crowns and a title of nobility for any assassin, however mean of estate, who should compass his death tempted many enterprising would-be murderers. There were two actual attempts. In 1582, Juan Jaureguy, pretending the submission of a petition, shot the Prince at close quarters through the neck and jaw, and was very nearly

successful. The successful enterprise was that of one who was a fanatic, not in the least tempted by rewards. Balthasar Gérard, calling himself for this occasion "Francis Guion," had from his youth been convinced that the best service he could render to religion and mankind would be the murder of the Prince of Orange. He was not even a Spaniard, but a Frenchman. For seven years he had meditated this project. A frail and mean-looking man, he failed to impress the Duke of Parma and the Jesuits with his ability for the deed. They pictured a murderer as a robust and swaggering fellow. But by dint of long intrigue he at length was permitted to do what he could; not, however, with any hope of results. More than a little devoid of imagination, perhaps, those principals in the art of assassination.

The fanatic was not, however, without some business instincts. He did not expect to escape after the deed was done. The rewards offered were of no use to him, but he arranged that his own family should receive them, which actually they did.

It was in July, 1584, that Gerard, with the pretext given out to all concerned of being a bearer of dispatches, came to Delft, and shot the Prince of Orange on the staircase of the Prinsenhof. It stands yet, hard by the Oude Kerk. There are the rooms, the staircase itself, and the mark of one of the bullets which passed through the Prince's body and struck the panelling.

In accordance with the spirit of the age, the assassin suffered a fearful death. He had attempted an escape, but was seized, and first repeatedly tortured, and at last sentenced to have his flesh torn away by red-hot pincers, and finally his heart torn out and flung in his face. He sustained all these hellish pains with a smiling fortitude that convinced all who beheld them that he must be supported through it all by the Devil; and finally, as we are rather incredibly told, a contemptuous smile moved his lips when his heart having duly been torn out, it was dashed in his face.

In the Nieuwe Kerk is the Prince's monument. There he lies, in white marble effigy. The States-General fittingly enshrined him, with his dog at his feet, a marble canopy over him, and emblematic figures of Justice, Courage, Religion and Liberty. A statue of him in bronze, habited in armour, stands at the head of the recumbent effigy; while at the feet is a bronze statue of Fame, with widespread wings.

Because he, the greatest of his line, rests here, in the little town of Delft, here too, rather than at The Hague, lie all his successors to this day.

So much of history we may permit ourselves in Delft, where William the Silent twelve years later was assassinated, and where we may stand before his magnificent tomb in the Oude Kerk. But we may not follow in these pages the story of battles by sea and land, of victories and defeats and of the final emergence of Dutch independence.

The Oude Kerk is the resting place of another great man : one who gave us English people a good deal of trouble and some humiliations ; Tromp, that Admiral whom most English writers were accustomed to style "Van Tromp." Like Nelson, he was killed in the hour of victory. That was in 1653. He was then in his fifty-sixth year. He gained no fewer than thirty - two naval engagements, and is the hero of whom the story is told that, after the Battle of the Dunes, in 1652, he hoisted a broom to the mast-head of his flagship, to signify that he had swept the seas, and would continue to sweep them, of his opponents.

THE PRINSENHOF.

His last battle is portrayed on his monument. It is rather a tremendous affair of contending full-sailed ships, waves and clouds of battle-smoke ; surrounded by military trophies. Here, too, lies Piet Hein, he who endeared himself to money-loving Dutch hearts by capturing the Spanish treasure-ship with its twelve million florins worth of silver.

Delft, apart from these features, does not display much to interest, in a country where there are so many other places of abounding picturesqueness. To me it seems indeed, in general, close and airless. The houses gather tall and stuffy about the still canals, into whose stagnant green waters the lime trees drop undeserved bouquets of blossom; and grey ghosts seem to peer over the shoulder even in the busier streets. Perhaps—nay, certainly—Delft lost much by fire in 1536, and much again in 1654, by the explosion of a powder-magazine.

Most Dutch towns in the seventeenth century produced painters, in the extraordinary development of art in this country at that time; and Delft is not without its honoured artist, Vermeer, 1632-1675. He is exactly contemporaneous with Peter de Hooch, and in general his subjects and methods are much the same; Dutch interiors painted in exceptionally clean, clear colours. But he sometimes painted views. His picture of Delft in the Mauritshuis at The Hague is very modern in selection and in treatment, and is an effect of brooding beauty, infinitely charming. We can all discuss art to-day; the more dogmatically when we can neither draw nor paint, for it is always more easy to discuss than to do; but the discussion is rather literary than technical. These are the critics who of late have "discovered" Vermeer; but painters knew and appreciated him long before those who handle the pen and not the brush were aware of his existence. Although some

of the buildings in that view are gone, and there is a bridge now where there is not one in the picture, it is still recognisable as Delft, with its yet-existing water-port, towered and spired, like that at Sneek.

To-day Delft has a porcelain factory ; but it is a revival. The old Delft porcelain industry expired in the eighteenth century, together with the making, here and elsewhere, of the famous Dutch tiles.

IX

Few can travel in Holland without noticing, and acquiring an affection for, the characteristic blue and white wall-tiles of the country.

There has of late years sprung up a passion for collecting these quaint decorative and pictorial tiles which, any time these last 300 years, have been, we may say, almost the commonplace of Dutch domestic interiors. How far the latest developments of this phase of collecting are due to the activities of dealers in curios, it would not be easy to say ; but a very real appreciation of the Dutch wall-tile has been growing for several years ; and it is now not easy to acquire good characteristic specimens, at a reasonable price, even in Holland itself, where, naturally, these curious productions abound.

It was in the early years of the seventeenth century that the Dutch wall-tile came into common

use in Holland. The rise of this peculiar form of interior domestic decoration is of somewhat obscure origin, but the style of the early tiles, decorative rather than pictorial, and polychromatic, instead of as in later developments (almost wholly) blue designs painted on a white glaze, suggests that this idea of furnishing a wall was derived from Spanish

sources. And, if we like to take the derivation a step further back, it will be found that the Spanish fashion was an inheritance from Moorish art, as exemplified in the decoration of the Alhambra.

When we consider the sufferings of the Dutch at the hands of the Spaniards in the thirty years or so before the opening of the seventeenth century,

it is surprising that anything of Spanish origin should have found any sort of favour in the Netherlands. But so it was; the idea came from the gorgeous coloured tiles in the Alhambra at Seville. This first series of tiles, of rich blues and yellows, with red and green more sparingly used, is clearly of Spanish-Moresque ancestry; even if of inferior craftsmanship. The designs on them are generally conventionalised flowers and fruits. They are the rarest and the most expensive to collect.

The standard size of the Dutch tile is a square of five inches, with a thickness of a quarter of an inch for the later types, and half an inch for the earlier. Apart from the style of decoration, this matter of thickness determines the comparative antiquity.

Just as the wall-tile in Holland displaced the once favourite wall decoration, Spanish leather, so, with the passing of the eighteenth century, the newer fashion of wall-paper ousted the tile, and tiles ceased to be made; while, not yet far enough removed in time to be antiquities, they became, as every recently demoded thing becomes, neglected and thought of no account at all. The works at Delft and elsewhere which must have made them in vast quantities, seeing how plentiful they are yet, ceased to be; and in fact the records of this trade were forgotten. A good deal has been written about Dutch tiles of late years, but it has been distinguished by too much serious enthusiasm for the so-called

" art " of them, and by too little historical information. It is the easiest thing for the enthusiastic amateur to write in terms of warm appreciation of the artistry of the Dutch tile, but it is not so easy to agree ; because as a matter of fact, the makers and decorators were not artists, but merely crafts-

men and journeymen, and their wares found production in bulk, commercially.

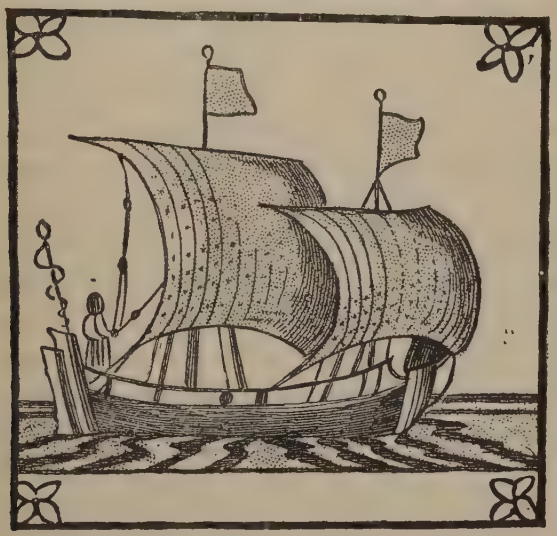
Technically, from the potter's and clayworker's point of view, the most of these productions are moderately poor stuff, the paste beneath the glaze being coarse with a large admixture of sand and grit. In the result, the thinner tiles (of the later period) are extremely brittle.

From the artist's standpoint, the three or four-coloured conventional designs of fruit, foliage and arabesques, marking the earlier forms, are coarsely executed; while the later pictorial blue and white tiles are charming and endearing rather because of their naïveté and a certain infantile queerness than for sheer artistic eminence. Add to these qualities the lure of a certain antiquity, and we can readily perceive that it is really a certain old-world charm that forms their attraction.

Having, however, placed this appreciation on its true basis, it may be admitted that the charm of the pictorial Dutch tile is very great. At the same time it may perhaps be allowed that, as a wall-decoration, quite apart from their attractions to collectors of individual specimens, tiles do not largely appeal to the modern idea. It must in this connection be remembered that the practice in Holland was, generally, to cover the complete wall-surface of a room with this kind of decoration. Sometimes it took several tiles to complete a pattern; in other instances, in the case of pictorial tiles, you would have either a complete sequence of pictures, or else picture-tiles set in amid plain white ones, all according to taste and fancy. In the Friesian Museum at Leeuwarden there are specimen rooms from Hindeloopen walled completely in blue and white tiles. The result is, in its way, charming; but for domestic interiors the effect is somewhat too cold. It gives an impression akin to being in a dairy.

Of course, we readily note the appeal these glazed tiles must have had to the typical passionately cleanly Dutch housewife. They looked so neat, tidy and clean, and when by any chance they became not clean, then with least effort they could be made so.

Scriptural subjects were among the most favourite themes for the old Dutch tile-painters. They are



the most interesting of all the blue and white tiles; and entertaining too; because to them the craftsmen brought all their quaint matter-of-fact outlook, combined with that complete disregard of the historical veracities which was shared by even the greatest artists of that age. Alike the little tile-painters and the big brothers of the brush were

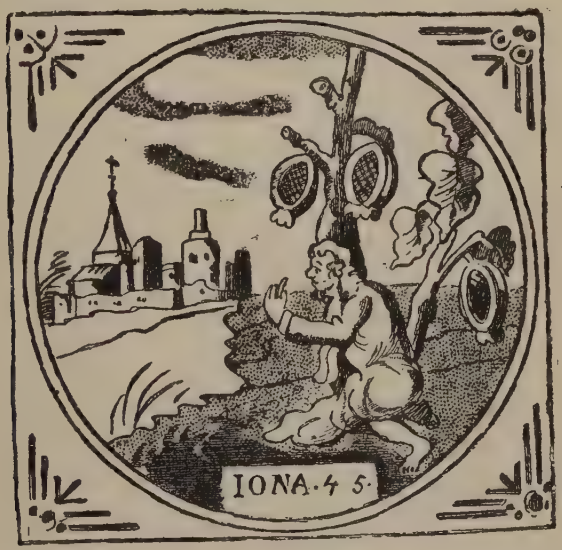
quite content to display Biblical scenes in much the same terms as they would have portrayed those of their own age.

The scriptural subjects which were favourite themes among the old Dutch tile-painters are perhaps the most interesting and amusing of all ; amusing because of this extraordinary naïveté which was part of the artistic equipment of those times : an utter disregard of the archæological requirements of historical painting or illustration. In common with many among the great masters, the practitioners of this little art of tile-painting represented Biblical scenes very much in the same terms as they would have displayed contemporary life. Here, for example, we have the prophet Jonah, seated under the gourd-tree, waiting to see what will happen to Nineveh, and hoping for the worst. We know it is Jonah, because of the gourd-tree ; and if we don't recognise that species we are assured of the identification because the painter has, very wisely, placed the inscription, " Iona, 4. 5 " beneath. It was well he did so, for the city in the background is Dutch, rather than oriental, in character. The verse reads : " So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." The gourd-tree is referred to in the next verse. It will be observed that the artist has forgotten the booth.

Although these quaintly-pictured tiles have a

distinct charm, it would be going too far to say that the men who painted them were artists. They were journeymen, who turned them out by the thousand. It is at once their antiquity and a certain childlike quality of drawing that we really admire.

These Biblical subjects, judging by the numerous



specimens of tiles so pictured seem to have been popular, a favour readily to be understood in the case of so God-fearing a people as the Dutch always have been.

Other popular subjects were shipping scenes and pastoral motives, both well within the range of every Hollander's experiences. Side by side with the

usual blue and white tile was a type with a band or framework of an ochreous hue, an addition to the blue. This was generally sprayed or splattered on to the tile with a brush.

After a long period of indifference, these wall-tiles are being eagerly sought after in Holland itself, not only by individuals, but by the old townships; and in such a way they must soon become difficult for an individual to acquire. The present writer saw recently in the town hall of Monnickendam alone four thousand specimens, diligently got together, by degrees; and private collectors become increasingly numerous.

Great numbers of these tiles have been destroyed or dispersed in the pulling down of old houses, not only in Holland, but also in London. The old Dutch merchant's house, No. 21, Austin Friars, in the City of London, built about 1670, and demolished in February, 1888, will be remembered by many. It was built by one of the Olmius family. Several of its rooms were lined with such tiles.

X

Five miles bring us from Delft into The Hague; the first part along a brick-paved road shaded by an avenue and running beside a broad canal. The Hague is entered through Ryswyk, famous in history

for the "Peace of Ryswyk," between England, Holland, Germany, France, and Spain, signed in 1697. A palace then stood here, and in it that settlement of warfare was effected. But the palace was long since demolished, and Ryswyk is now the least interesting suburb of The Hague, at the end of a long, long tramway-infested broad street, with industrial developments and a kind of suburban smugness infinitely uninspiring.

It is an uncomplimentary introduction to a great and fine town. For The Hague is a very considerable place, with some 260,000 inhabitants, and in parts stately. Something very cosmopolitan and urbane, polished and suave, about The Hague; and very rightly so, for it is the Court and Society centre; the seat of government; and by consequence with palaces, courts of justice, barracks, parks, picture-galleries and some very fine hotels. But until 1806 The Hague had no status. The States-General of the Republic met there; delegates from provincial councils and towns, but it was denied any individual representation; not altogether unlike the position of Washington to-day, in the United States of America, where Congress sits, while Washington itself is disfranchised.

It was Louis Napoleon, King of Holland, who gave The Hague its status. It had until then been styled "the largest village in Europe." No one would now, whatever the political and social position of The Hague, describe its appearance either as that

of a village, or as typically Dutch. It has, for example, no canals, so usual a feature in Dutch towns that we might describe them as the essential stigmata of the Hollander community. There is in the town but one sheet of water, the Vyver, and that is the sole remnant of the once encircling moat; and it is kept filled and fresh only by pumping water from Scheveningen.

The Hague is gay and without care; the Paris, so to speak, of Holland. Not, indeed, the capital of the country; that is Amsterdam, and there is the chief Royal Palace. But you imagine, such is The Hague, in every well-dressed, distinguished-looking person in the distinguished-looking hotels a diplomat.

Nor is the country outside the town—to the north of it, at least—anything like the scenery of Holland. It is for some two miles "the Bosch," the woodland; and the Bosch is the most English-like scenery you find in this country. English with a difference. Take of ten parts, let us say, three of Windsor Forest, three of some typical great English country park, two of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, and finally two of the Bois de Boulogne, and you have The Woodland of the Bosch. Here are ancient oaks and beeches and other forest-trees, in their natural growth and setting, untouched by the Dutchman's ordering and pruning hand, which almost everywhere else has ordained that trees shall be grown in formal avenues and in a shape that commends itself to him

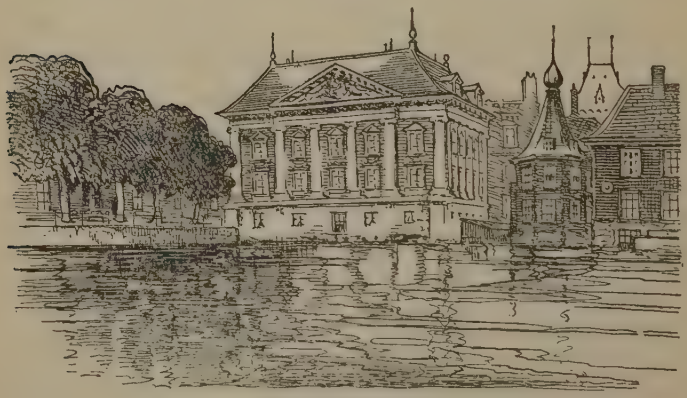
rather than to the natural impulses of any species of tree. It is the "woodland wild," the surviving fragment of the chase in which of old, ever so long ago, those Counts of Holland hunted, after whom 'S. Gravenhage was named. Do you romantically think, wandering in that boscage, you hear their hunting-horns faintly blowing, down the centuries? You may so imagine; but it is to-day only the horns of the motor-cars along the Leyden road.

The Hague is a town of streets incredibly crowded. The Spuistraat at mid-day is no place for quiet meditation. The shops are fine and expensive. So too, are those hotels, already mentioned. You cannot have a Royal Court and cheapness, I think, side by side.

The States-General of the Netherlands meet at The Hague in the venerable buildings, much restored, of the Binnenhof; actually in the Hall of the Knights, and the Chamber of the Estates of Holland, and the former Ball Room of the ancient Palace of the Counts of Holland. All these are to be seen by those who will. Adjoining is the Mauritshuis, built originally in 1634 as a residence for Count John Maurice of Nassau, Governor of the Dutch West Indies territories in Brazil, and rebuilt in 1718. It has now for a century been the Royal picture gallery, open daily to the public.

Near by is the Gevangenpoort, opening into the Buitenhof. This old gatehouse was, as its name implies, a prison. There the Grand Pensionary, the

chief minister of State, John Van Barneveldt, then seventy-two years of age, was imprisoned before he was beheaded in the Binnenhof Square in 1619, on a false charge of conspiring against the Stadtholder, Maurice, Prince of Orange, son of William the Silent. The charges, partly of withstanding his authority, which he had illegally augmented with a view to becoming independent of the popular vote, and partly a religious dispute, cover the



THE MAURITSHUIS.

memory of this son of the liberator with an indelible stain of infamy. Six years later, having brought Holland to the brink of ruin, Maurice died.

The Gevangenpoort fifty-three years later witnessed an even more cruel tragedy, when, in 1672, Cornelius and John de Witt were seized by an infuriated mob and literally, not metaphorically, torn limb from limb. It formed a direct conse-

quence in the chain of events beginning with the murder of Barneveldt. John de Witt, his mind occupied with the true interests of his country, was a statesman convinced that the republican form of Government was, and always had been since the death of William the Silent, menaced by the autocratic aspirations of his descendants. William the Third, great-grandson of the Silent one (and afterwards also William the Third of England), was himself actually a silent man, alike by temperament and State policy. He aimed at being unchallenged ruler, and by no means relished the necessity of election as Stadtholder, which John de Witt maintained was not merely the constitutional basis of the country, but ought, in view of the efforts at personal aggrandisement, to be further restricted and safeguarded by conditions. Unfortunately for de Witt, there was then a popular party, an Orange mob, who thought otherwise. His brother, Cornelius de Witt, was arrested on a false charge of conspiring to assassinate the then newly-elected Stadtholder. John de Witt was lured to the Gevangenpoort by a message purporting to come from his brother, incarcerated there. It was a bait contrived by the Orange party with the direct connivance of William to secure the presence of the two brothers and to murder them, then and there. Such are the ways of statecraft; and such, on occasion, the methods of one who, sixteen years later, became with his wife, Mary, a sovereign in

England; called in to help maintain the liberties of the country.

The Gevangenpoort is a Tower of London in little; full of prison-cells and instruments of torture and such-like engines of political and religious persuasion; a headman's axe and block, well used, thumbscrews and branding-irons; cells where prisoners were starved to death with the added refinement of a flue from a kitchen where appetising food was being cooked ventilating into the prisoner's solitary hold. There are inscriptions on the walls, made by those unhappy enough to have been shut up here. All these things teach us that authority—no matter whether it be the authority of religion, princes or democracy—has in it all the instincts of the tiger and the savage; the instincts of self-preservation before all else; and they show that tyranny will inevitably, sooner or later, succeed tyranny, no matter whether it be exercised by a religion, a dynasty or a mob. Toleration is a rare plant, an exotic. The winds of dispute wither it very readily. Cherish it, then, while you may, lest it die.

The Dutch have learned to do that. They have done it with tears and blood, in the school of experience. So Holland, to the stranger, at any rate, is now a land of calm, with no very forceful convictions; where the chief desire of the nation as a whole, and of its people individually, is to be let alone. But because they want so to be let alone and to keep what they hold—and they hold a good

deal more than little Holland—the army is at present being increased, and what they call a navy is being strengthened. The suspicion is that someone, some day, will be wanting Java, and perhaps Sumatra, and the Lord knows what else in the East Indies. But if some one has a mind to doing that, it will need all Holland's resources to keep those distant possessions.

You hear in Holland a very general discontent with proposals for military expansion and for increase in the navy. Holland, although actually a kingdom, is in essence a crowned republic and is, and always has been, democratic in thought. A favourite source of amusement is the navy, in whose establishment it is said there are more Admirals than ships. It would not become a foreign visitor either to write opinions on these matters or to talk them; but he may report the talk and the views of Hollanders themselves. For myself, I think all that talk of there being more Admirals than ships is an exaggeration. It is more like one Admiral to each ship.

It may, however, be conceded that, if you, either as a nation or as an individual hold property and are not able to defend the possession of it, in a world not now less ruled by might than it was in bygone centuries, someone, sooner or later, will surely take, or will make an attempt on that property. Only by a show of force, in a mobilised army during the Great War, did Holland succeed in keeping her frontiers completely inviolate.

There is a Palace of Peace at The Hague. It was established by idealists with much money and little sense for the purpose of affording a meeting place where the representatives of nations could meet and settle their disputes amicably, without recourse to arms. The very need imagined for such an establishment and such a tribunal was, if you do but consider it, the gravest warning of impending great wars. To-day that magnificent Palace is the most ironical place in the world ; and Holland, the most non-partisan nation, where it was thought most fitting to build that Palace, has ever since, unjustly, been accused by the various contending parties in the Great War, of sympathy and aid extended to one side or the other. Actually, Holland was frantically, as a nation, anxious to keep out of it, and the farmers and business men equally concerned to be neutral and to do a very profitable business with all belligerents. Geographical circumstances made Germany the best customer.

It was the most characteristic as well as the most obvious role for a country of such well-established trading instincts, and a country so small, to adopt. It could do no other without a very excellent chance of being destroyed by one set of belligerents or another. And yet the history of the Dutch people might well make any Great Power, however great, think very seriously before making war upon Holland.

So Dutch traders and farmers did very well out of the war, up to a point. The farmers sold their

best products, at the highest prices, to Germany, and retailed the inferior stuff for home consumption at prices by no means less ; and they realised great fortunes. But the country itself went short of food, and the expenses of mobilisation, to defend the land in case of emergency threw a heavy burden on all. So it is doubtful whether, when a balance is struck, the enriched traders and farmers are so greatly advantaged, after all.

Well, then, here is the Palace of Peace ; that fatuous creation of the well-meaning but not so very wise Andrew Carnegie, who devoted £300,000 to it ; not knowing that it was really the Mausoleum of Peace he was erecting. For Peace that really was Peace died in 1914. If ghosts can revisit these earthly scenes, surely the embarrassed and disappointed one of a frustrated old idealist must haunt the place.

All this was the outcome of the first International Peace Conference, called in 1899 by Nicholas the Second, Czar of Russia, who was the first to break the peace, in spite of the project for establishing councils of arbitration. The second International Peace Conference in 1907, perhaps rather hastened a world-war than either preventing or delaying it ; for, in the impossible attitude adopted by the German delegates, just those matters which were most provocative of a conflict were ruled out of discussion.

In fact, later history has shown the world in

general, what many of them clearly saw, that Germany was determined to force a war, in which she was convinced of victory. Thus it is with no joy you visit the Palace of Peace, and see the elaborate mockery of it all.

The building stands in grounds of sixteen acres. It was designed by a French architect, Cordonnier, as the result of a competition in which two hundred and sixteen competitors engaged ; and was completed in 1913, to house the Permanent Court of Arbitration, but just in time for the Great War. One regrets rather more than anything else, among those things not seen, that Permanent Court and its arbitrators in the four years of war.

The provisions for arbitrating are calculated to impress with the difficulty of it all ; and the housing of the happy, well-paid delegates with the jolly circumstances of being an arbitrator. A library of 200,000 books is there ; map-rooms and every device for referring to abstruse questions ; and telegraph-rooms, and half-basement quarters—a kind of semi-dungeons—are provided for the journalists who are (or were) to report the deliberations of the delegates. The nations duly played up, like accomplished comedians, to this tragic-comedy. Great Britain contributed those four stained-glass windows of the Great Court ; France, the Gobelins tapestries ; Holland, some pictures and the seven windows of the staircase ; Germany, the massive entrance-gates ; Austria, the bronze and crystal chandeliers ;

the United States, an allegorical group of statuary; and other nations in their several ways; not forgetting Switzerland, with the works for the clocks. Switzerland, not faced with the problem of expanding its navy, perhaps felt that clockworks—a very minor contribution—were all it was reasonably called upon to contribute in the cause of putting a stop to the growth of armaments.

On the whole, in spite of all the money lavished on this building, it is architecturally disappointing, and a mistake. Disappointing, for the work is coarsely executed; and a mistake because in this land of characteristic and fantastic towers without number, to add another, intended to be much of the same character, but of inferior design and execution, is as absurd as it would be to try and sell a baker an ill-baked home-made loaf.

XI

If you wish to see how the Dutch enjoy themselves at the seaside, it is to Scheveningen you should go; although indeed Scheveningen is international, or cosmopolitan as Ostend. It is only a little more than two miles from The Hague, and for that reason it is a very fashionable place. The Palace of Peace stands in the Park Zorgvliet, immediately to the left, at the beginning of the old road from The Hague

to Scheveningen. There is probably, away from the Sahara and the sandy wastes of Egypt not so much sand anywhere as at Scheveningen. Sand on the shore, sand in the public-halls and casinos, and sand always, and very much of it, in the restaurants and in your coffee. And you find next morning, when brushing your hair, that you have brought some of it away with you. The multitudes who frequent Scheveningen sit there, for the most part, on these sands in extraordinary chairs which seem to be a combination of sentry-box and the kind of chair used by the porter in the hall of an old-fashioned club. There you will see stolid, fat, middle-aged Dutch people, sleeping away the afternoon, like a slug in a cranny. Perhaps it is even better to be a reposeful slug, thinking of nothing at all, than it is to be an agitated and self-exhausting grasshopper. I do not know.

An Englishman, I think, ought to see Scheveningen, even if only to be amused at the fishermen's red breeches, the enormous figures of the fishermen's women-folk, who seem to wear more petticoats here than anywhere else in Holland, and the bath-attendants, with "Badman" embroidery on their jerseys. But the scene is not what you who came to see picturesque Holland really have come for; and the ridiculous seaside villas, of the same order of absurdity as those in France and Belgium, but if possible more absurd, are not Dutch architecture. They are not architecture at all. Remark all these

things to a Dutchman, and he will say what you want is Volendam, with Marken added. And you do. You indeed do want Volendam and Marken. He intends it satirically, for the Englishman, and the artists of all nations, go there for the picturesque costumes.

When, about 1380, Willem Benkelzoom made the great discovery that with the aid of salt a fresh herring can be preserved and stored away, instead of going bad and being an offence, he made Scheveningen. Not, be it said, the Scheveningen of the Kursaals, the Noah's Ark villas, the bathers and the Badmen, but the real old fisher-place that was, and in its own quarter, yet is. The place grew up, besides this grey-blue North Sea, on the herring-fishery; and just according to whether it was a good season or a bad, Scheveningen rejoiced or sorrowed, flourished or suffered. When, in June, the catch came abundantly home, it was met by the fishermen's folk with song; the old song "Die Nieuwe Harang." I think they do that no more.

No man unless he be a Dutch "schipper" could possibly enumerate all the many kinds of vessels seen in these inland or coastwise Dutch waters, or very well describe their build and rig, and points of similarity or contrast. The names of them, from boats and barges, to larger craft, are bewildering. There are "praams"— I know what a "praam" is, it is a small sort of a lighter, very often used for conveying market-

garden produce to the nearest town; Schuits (pronounced "scoot"); boters, pinks, tjalks, bommens (but a bommen is a "pink" by another name); aaks, boks, schouws; and the trekschuits by which passenger traffic is maintained on the chief canal-routes. I had almost forgotten the boier, or small yacht; and the klippers, the schiffs, and the hoogarts. But I have not forgotten the "paviljoen-pom," whose name sounds like majestic music amid architectural magnificences. Something royal and rococo, like the Prince Regent's marine palace at Brighton, with a double-bass obbligato. I should like a voyage on Friesland waters in a boat with a style like that. It sounds the last word in a kind of terrific and overawing dignity; but I don't expect the reality would be quite, or nearly, as good.

As for yachts, Holland ought to be the foremost place for them, because the very name, although by long usage it seems so English, is Dutch. There is even a build of boat called a "Dutch toad," in old English shipping terms. I have not succeeded in exploring that, although it sounds so extremely intriguing; but I can visualise something ungraceful and squattering.

I left Scheveningen and so through the Bosch, past the Huis ten Bosch, for Leyden. The "House in the Wood" is a Royal Palace, not often used. In it the first of the futile International Peace Conferences was held, in 1899. The still waters and

the quiet of the woods render the place charming, although the exterior of the Palace itself is not an imposing work. It derives from a villa built for the wife of Prince Frederick Henry of Orange in 1645. But the paintings of the Orange Hall and especially the Japanese and Chinese embroideries and cabinets are beautiful enough to make a connoisseur faint with the envy of baulked possession.

Leyden is nine miles distant. The Bosch ends all too soon and you come into Leyden through open country.

There is, of course, a good deal characteristically Dutch in that ancient town—canals and gabled houses; but the famous University and a good deal else is partly like some eighteenth-century town in France and partly resembles the old courts of the Middle and Inner Temple in London. Pump Court, in the Temple, is quite typical of the University side of Leyden, and of many of its grave and reverend brick streets.

Although the University was founded so far back as 1575—which is as the day before yesterday in comparison with Oxford or Cambridge, it has not that venerable collegiate appearance we generally in England associate with University buildings. If we say and think it has an appearance of an abode of lawyers, that of course, is by association with the look of the Temple and Gray's Inn. Yet, although the general view is that of a reserved domestic architecture, much like typical old Queen Anne

houses, Leyden University actually centres about a nunnery.

It has always been an abode of learning. It is probably the only place in the world where rooms to let are announced in classical language. "Cubicula locanda" you may note displayed in the course of your explorations. Learning pervades Leyden. But it is learning of a more practical kind than that imparted at Oxford or Cambridge, and it has never been a place conferring a social cachet. Students are not sent to Leyden to make friends useful in after life among the governing classes. They go seriously to acquire knowledge. The University would seem even to have been founded on that serious and thorough note. When William the Silent asked the people of Leyden, after he had relieved the town after its gallant defence in the Spanish siege of 1574 how he should recognise their bravery and sacrifices, they chose rather to have a University than to accept the offer of going tax-free.

Medicine and science have ever been the chief subjects on which Leyden University has built its fame. Indeed, so awed by the deep knowledge of its professors was the world of old that they were supposed to dabble in the black arts of sorcery, and to be questers after the Philosopher's Stone, which would turn base metals into gold. When an electric spark was produced in a Leyden jar, about 1729, it was an uncanny demonstration absolutely in keeping with the rather uncomfortable

reputation for mystic deeds which the learned but harmless professors of Leyden had long been saddled with. But it was rather late in the day for sorcery.

If this were a guide-book (what the Dutch style a " gids " ; one of those words they have adopted from the French and given a grotesque spelling), a very great deal could be written of the history of Leyden, and of the contents of its museums and picture-galleries. Holland seems to the stranger to be a land of picture-galleries and museums. But these pages are nothing like that. They are just impressions. That being so, it behoves the writer to give his immediate impressions of such outstanding objects as readily attract attention. The chief among these is unquestionably the Stadhuis tower and spire. It generally, as a matter of fact, is so, in any Dutch town. This feature of Leyden Stadhuis is however, a very tall and upstanding one and a prime specimen of the fantastic, or " design-it-as-you-go-on " style. Making a beginning as a respectable, steady-going, rather stodgy tower, it then begins an amazing and soaring career of what look like articles of domestic furniture and decoration piled one upon another during an orgie of spring-cleaning ; Moorish tea-tables, occasional tables, work-boxes and those misbegotten objects neither of use nor beauty which most people, even the best-intentioned among us, accumulate. This extraordinary pile finally proceeds to its conclusion

with something like the gigantic model of a pine apple, topped with the lantern-cage of a lightship.

It is only one of many of the kind in Holland, but it is a prime specimen, and it renders at least one corner of staid Leyden as completely and boisterously Dutch as anything in the country. The immediate surroundings ably keep it in countenance. There in the foreground is the Vischmarkt (I need not translate that into English), and what looks like a canal, but is indeed the Rhine; all that is left of it by the time it comes to Leyden; or rather the Old Rhine. Other and lustier Rhine mouths are those at Rotterdam and Dordrecht; and smaller elsewhere. Under various aliases, just like any other German seeking to disguise his nationality, they pretend to be other than they are, and so escape away as the Maas, the Waal, the Yssel, and the Merwede, and possibly others yet.

The most staid and placid object in this view, seeming to reprove all this fantasy, is the Korenbeurg, a bridge with a classic timber covered way on it, very dignified, but looking scandalised by its situation, and hurt by being placed in a false position on a bridge where it appears to have no business at all.

If you have speech with the good folk of Leyden, it is quite likely that, seeing you to be a stranger and unaccountably interested in such things, you will be informed that Rembrandt was a native of the town. Leyden is not greatly intrigued with

LEYDEN: THE STADHUIS TOWER AND THE OLD RHINE.

the foremost of Dutch painters, and there is not one of his works in the place. But anyone will tell you where he was born; in a mill to be found picturesquely situated outside the town, on the Old Rhine. He was not, as a sheer matter of fact, born there, but picturesque legends are ever more acceptable than facts. He was, it is true, son of the miller, Harmenz van Ryn, whose mill stood on the site of the present one, and was born in 1606, somewhere in the town; but as no one knows exactly where, the mill has been adopted as the birthplace in default. When he was in his twenty-first year, he removed to Amsterdam, and Leyden knew him no more.

Dutch church interiors are singularly alike. All are lofty and most have apsidal east ends, with a semicircular cluster of columns in the choir and an ambulatory behind them. Such is St. Peter's, Leyden, and such, too, is St. Pancras, better known as the Hooglandsche Kerk. In the first is the very fine monumental effigy, by Rombaud Verhulst, of Johannes van Kerckhoven, 1660; and in St. Pancras' is the beautiful little mural monument, charmingly designed and sculptured with Cupids blowing trumpets, of the stout-hearted Burgemeester of Leyden during the siege of 1573–4; that enduring Peter Adrian van der Werff who, when the burghers came, despairing, to him, saying they were starving, declared that they could have his body to stay their hunger, if they would, but surrender he would not.

XII

FIFTEEN miles separate Leyden and Haarlem, passing Sassenheim, Lisse, Hillegom, Bennebroek, and Vogelzande. It is a country of sand, for the sea, although not visible from the road, is not far away, and to the right stretched for miles until 1853,

REMBRANDT'S MILL, LEYDEN.

when the draining of it was completed after fourteen years' work, the great Haarlemmer Meer, an inland sea on which battled in the sixteenth century the ships of the "Water-Beggars" and the Spaniards. Seventy-two square miles were added to the country when that water was abolished and the fertile

Haarlemmer Polder took its place. The depth of the meer was never more than six feet, and generally only about four, yet on it naval battles were lost and won, and at the draining away of the water many relics of these conflicts were discovered.

There is thus not merely much sand, but a certain kind of look as of new settlements about the villages. They are upstarts and not picturesque.

The business of all this part is the old famous one of tulip-growing, to which were long since added other bulbous flowers ; and more recently the growing of roses. Approaching the town of Haarlem, the road runs through the lovely Haarlemmer Hout, or Haarlem Forest. The town is the capital of all this floricultural industry, which you perceive to be an extremely busy and profitable trade ; not only by the wayside evidences of numerous large firms engaged in it, with their extensive fields and considerable business premises, but by the beautiful modern villas in their own wooded grounds in the Forest. Modern Continental villas are too frequently garish and pretentious, and so completely lacking in taste that they are a by-word. And when a builder erects one by the sea, he seems to go quite rabid. But these country houses are distinguished exceptions ; and as we come into the suburbs of prosperous and expanding Haarlem, it will be found that they, too, partake of that renaissance of taste which began (to give a convenient date), with the

opening of this twentieth century, and has since then, until halted everywhere by the Great War, made astonishing progress.

Everyone has read of that great Tulip Mania which in the early part of the seventeenth century sent all Holland crazy with speculation. The tulip was first heard of in 1559, when Conrad Gesner saw a specimen growing in a garden at Augsburg, in Germany. It had come from Constantinople. Soon afterwards this rare plant from Asia Minor became a passion with wealthy fanciers, and by 1600 there were few rich people in Holland who did not possess some. The cult was a fashion, rather than a real intrinsic appreciation of the tulip's peculiar and stately beauty. We may find an explanation of the extraordinary frenzy of the rise in prices of tulip-bulbs, culminating in 1636 in the value of a single *Semper Augustus* bulb, sold for 13,000 florins, or about £1,300, in the sudden new wealth of Holland. The stricken and persecuted land of Spanish oppression had by dint of the trading abilities of her merchants, become intensely prosperous. Not only had Spain been politically beaten, but the Dutch traders had captured her trade. Everywhere in Holland at that time the abundance of prosperity was bearing fruit in the patronage of artists. To it we owe the great works of the Dutch school of painters in that era, and the rise of the Dutch Renaissance architecture, as expressed in the lovely Stadhuisen and other public and private buildings. The possession

of anything rare was competed for, and it needed little for the starting of a craze.

But the Tulip Mania became a madness that went so far as to become a stock-exchange boom; and dealers and private buyers who never wished to grow the bulbs bought and sold what they never saw, intent only on snatching a profit on the turn of the market. Trade was neglected to speculate in tulips.

Occasionally it happened that a buyer would take delivery of a rare bulb. An amusing story was told of a merchant who had done so. It was a *Semper Augustus* which had cost him 3,000 florins; either not a very good specimen, or perhaps early in the rise, because, as we have seen, a bulb of that name rose to almost four times as much. He was probably a shrewd merchant, who was intending to sit on his security until he made a splendid profit. But not a very careful person, for he left it on the counter of his office. We are not told how long he left it there, but the modern way would have been to deposit it in the safe at once. At any rate, his negligence cost him his bulb, for a sailor who had come to give him news of the arrival of ships thought the bulb was an onion, and put it in his pocket, to eat on the quay, with a red herring. The merchant, who soon missed his bulb, arrived only to find the sailor eating the last fragment of that £280 worth of relish with his food.

When the Tulip Mania burst, in 1636, and prices

fell calamitously, thousands of people were ruined and the very trade of the country suffered severely for years. Tulips were then comparatively cheap, and a *Semper Augustus* which had been 13,000 florins' value, was worth only 50 florins.

There is a Tulip Sunday around Haarlem, towards the close of April. Foreign tourists therefore do not often see Haarlem's most beautiful sight, nor the acres upon acres of hyacinths ; only the coloured picture-postcards of them. Those bloom all the year round in the shop-windows of the town, but they scarcely fill the place of the actual display.

The Dutch bulb-growers are used to great crowds of visitors, mostly their own compatriots, at tulip and hyacinth-time. It is a recognised pilgrimage, to drive to the flower-farms and admire those gorgeous carpets of colour ; but while you are loud in praise of the Darwin tulips, or are especially interested in hyacinths that appeal to your æsthetic tastes, the grower himself, it will be found, is apt to be enthusiastic only on varieties that do not especially appeal to you. For he is a connoisseur, not of necessity in beauty, but far more likely in rarities. And you have to recollect that he is a bulb-grower not for the joy of seeing all these acres in bloom—which after all is only a very fleeting joy—but for business. And a very thriving kind of business it remains.

To visit one of these business-men at "coffee-drinking," which we would call tea-time, with a

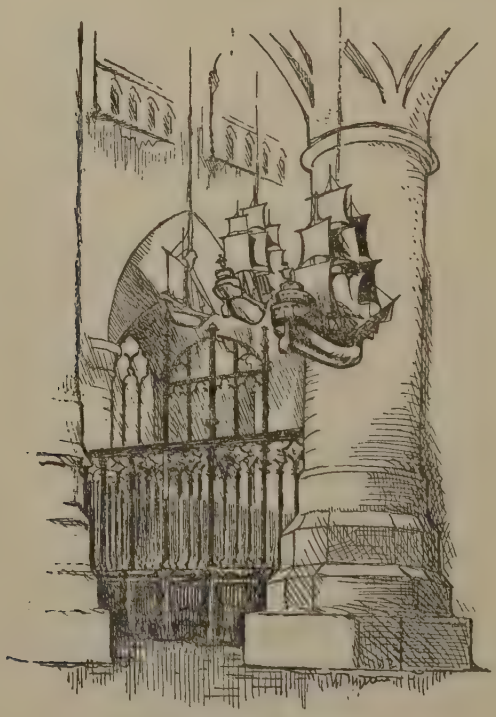
Dutch friend, and then to go with him and listen to the talk about new varieties of feathered and striped tulips is to learn that novelty is far more admired than intrinsic beauty; because novelties are more valuable.

The great bulb-barns, where in June, when the flowering is all done and when the bulbs are brought in to be dried and cleaned, sorted and stored away, are interesting. The slightly aromatic interiors are busy with workpeople, brushing the onion-like bulbs and peeling them. Others are putting them away into bins, and into racks, according to varieties; the racks reaching far away overhead, into the dim recesses of the roof, accessible only by long ladders. Generally there is a cat, or a number of cats, living in the barns, for mice seem to be rather fond of bulbs.

The centre of Haarlem is the Groote Markt, where the great church of St. Bavo stands in one corner, with the electric trams swinging round the narrow street at the east end of it, and the statue of Coster and the old Meat Market at the west end. The Haarlemmers consider that Coster, and not Gutenberg, of Mayence, invented the art of printing, shortly before 1447. The Chinese believe that (with a difference) they did the same, and forgot all about it, many centuries before.

The great church is one of the finest in Holland, celebrated too, for its great organ, built in 1738, and one of the largest known. You can hear the

thunders and the reverberations of it from without, in spite of the rattle of the electric trams. The Koster who showed me round, with a profound indifference to this exceptionally beautiful church and spat indifferently on the floor and the pillars



EX-VOTO SHIPS, HAARLEM.

and the seats, removed his hat—quite an exceptional thing in this country in the House of God, which perhaps does not seem to them to be divinely occupied at times other than those of Divine Service.

It is a curious mentality which will permit a Dutchman to wear his hat in a church, while he would always, with an instinctive politeness, remove it on entering a private house.

Perhaps it may be the survival of a hatred and contempt for the old religion of the persecuting Spaniards, long ago, which revealed itself then in violence and destruction, and still shows itself in the form of severely and thoroughly whitewashing all interiors to the likeness of bare meeting-houses.

But the interior of St. Bavo is rather exceptionally ornate, and there are even, very astonishingly, small models of ships suspended in the choir. They date from 1668, but represent earlier ones. In a Roman Catholic church we should call them "ex voto," and regard them as peculiarly Catholic offerings.

On a pillar, close at hand, the heights of some bygone excessively tall and absurdly short Haarlemmers are marked; and somewhere about in the building (vainly I sought it) is the gravestone of the boy who was rude to his father and mother, and so died young. His little finger according to legend, grows up through the slab, and has to be pruned once in every five years. The pruning must have taken place shortly before my visit; for never a little finger was there.

Here, as elsewhere, you perceive piles of "stoofs" (stoofjes); those small perforated wooden boxes that are a feature of most Dutch churches, often

carved and brightly painted. To a stranger their use is rather puzzling, but possibly you have guessed already that "stoof" means literally "stove." They are the usual winter foot-warmers for the Dutch women during service, and contain a metal tray for peat. The Dutchwomen sit with their feet on them, hidden beneath their capacious skirts.

One object the Koster will be sure to point out. That is the cannon-ball still embedded in the wall. It passed through the church, above the pulpit, just missing the preacher's head. It is a relic of the great and tragic siege of Haarlem by the Spaniards in 1572. Haarlem does not forget that. The starving and hard-pressed people, relieved from time to time in that severe winter, when the Haarlemmer Meer was solidly frozen over, and when provisions were brought in by helpers coming through the fogs and darkness on skates, could at last endure no more. Winter passed and with it the protection of the ice. Yet it was not until July 12th that, after vainly expecting relief by the troops of the Prince of Orange, Haarlem surrendered. Men, women and children alike had fought the Spaniards, and had repulsed them with heavy loss, repeatedly. Trained soldiers could have done no more.

The horrors of the massacre that followed, when two thousand three hundred Haarlem citizens were murdered, in a savage reprisal for their heroic defence of seven months, are a part of the story common to many a Dutch town. Twelve thousand of those

Spanish besiegers had fallen by wounds or disease in those seven months; and Philip of Spain, long vainly expecting the surrender, was ill at Segovia. The news of the surrender, however, communicated to him by the Duke of Alva, restored him to health. His secretary, Cayas, wrote from Madrid, "The principal medicine which has cured His

THE GROOTE MARKT, HAARLEM.

Majesty is the joy caused to him by the good news which you have communicated of the surrender of Haarlem."

The recovery from those terrible times seems to us astonishingly swift and complete. Twenty-eight years later, so prosperous had Haarlem, among many other towns, become that it was the centre of a school of architecture. Soon after the opening

of the seventeenth century, 1603, was built the Meat Market, hard by the Groote Kerk ; one of the most charming of the public buildings of the Dutch Renaissance ; one of those banded red brick and stone buildings which, about 1880-1890 formed a motive to a group of English architects, in the popularity at that time of this period of architecture. The most prominent and the most successful of those imitative works in London is the lofty building by Norman Shaw at the corner of Pall Mall and St. James's Street, opposite St. James's Palace ; but numerous domestic buildings with the same inspiration are to be found in Harrington Gardens, South Kensington.

The industry and the united determination of the Dutch people, working together to retrieve the ills of a foreign domination, and conscious of a national existence had their results alike in wealth and artistic expression. Those men who brought these things about are to be found pictured in the works of Frans Hals, who worked here in Haarlem in those years, and until 1664. There they are, in ten noble paintings, in the municipal museum ; the " Arquebusiers," those famous " corporation " pieces ; Nicholas van der Meer, Burgemeester of Haarlem, and his wife ; and others ; the work of that greatest of colourists, which no visitor to Haarlem can afford to miss.

Haarlem is growing yet. It has a great railway station in a quarter of the town as little Dutch-like

as can be imagined; where the modern hotels are, and the great business premises; all very international and uncharacteristic.

Before bidding good-bye to Haarlem, I sought on its outskirts the old inn called "Kraankjelek," whose name means "the leaking tap." Near by it is an ancient and hollow oak; its hollowed trunk railed off; which is (or at any rate, used to be), greatly resorted to by those Haarlem families who desired additions to their ranks. Or so the story goes. It was good enough for the children of a simpler age. When a boy or girl was required, a nurse was sent to the tree, in whose hollowed recesses were numbers of lovely infants waiting to be claimed. They received the nurse with appeals of "Take me, take me." Selecting one or more, the nurse extracted a promise of good behaviour, and conveyed the recruits home. So it was that when Haarlem children were ill-behaved, their parents always reminded them of this promise. It is not recorded whether they threatened to send them back.

I peered through the railings, but I could see no children; so I presume that to-day they are obtained elsewhere.

XIII

I LEFT Haarlem for Amsterdam by road. Had I known what those ten miles of road were like, I would have gone any other way, for truly it is as

THE AMSTERDAM GATE, HAARLEM.

depressing a route as well may be imagined; and it does by no means maintain the picturesque promise of the exit from Haarlem by the Amsterdamsche Poort. That ancient gate, the only one remaining,

presents two faces altogether unlike each other, one towards the town and the other to Amsterdam. There is a great deal of traffic along this road, and the roadway through the gate is now far too narrow.

In all those ten miles to Amsterdam you pass through dismal dull scenes such as you are accustomed to on the outskirts of every great and growing city. There is the expectation of further expansion, in the notice-boards of land for building, and indeed in factories built a little before the psychological moment, and now with notices offering "Te Koop," *i.e.*, "To be Sold"; and houses "Te Huur," that is, "To Let." An unpicturesque canal on one side of the road, an electric light-railway on the other, and an ordinary railway, all combine to make the way unpleasant; and there are many more motor cars here than anywhere else in Holland; a country where, as a rule, there are singularly few.

This unprepossessing approach is succeeded by a long, narrow, intensely crowded and busy street conducting directly to the harbour and the Central railway station, which faces it and is Central only in name. There are no railways at all in, or anywhere near, the centre of Amsterdam, which is the Oude Turfmarkt. There could not very well be railways there, because of the conditions. Amsterdam is built on piles amidst the waters. The street plan of it very closely resembles the half of a spider's web, or the half of a wheel, and comparatively few of those streets are without a canal. It is these

canals, into which the foundations of the houses often sheerly descend, in the older parts of the city, which have given Amsterdam the very obvious name of " the Northern Venice."

Amsterdam has a population of 570,000, including not far short of 70,000 Jews, in whose hands—dirty hands as a rule—is most of the diamond trade. This is the chief market for diamonds in Europe ;

THE WEEPERS' TOWER, AMSTERDAM.

and by consequence has long also been the home of the diamond-cutting industry. Jews flocked to Amsterdam long ago, because of Dutch toleration in times when intolerance was the system of every other country. It needs no Sherlock Holmes's penetration to identify a Jew when you see one ; nor is the occupation of a diamond-merchant less obvious. His is the elongated, rarely-cut nail of

the little finger, with which it is found most convenient to sort diamonds and brilliants.

House building in Amsterdam is an operation, if not entirely peculiar to itself, at least singularly different from most other places. In London, a vacant site is excavated with the spade and shovel, for it is earth. In New York it is blasted, for the island of Manhattan is solid rock. In Amsterdam the site is prepared by the driving of new timber piles. That is the marvel of Amsterdam—which, by the way, the Hollander pronounces much like "Umsterdum." Millions upon millions of timber piles of some twenty-five feet or so have gone to the making of the place, from the beginning of the essential Amsterdam, the dam on the Amstel which now, called simply "The Dam," is the actual centre of the city's life, although not its geographical hub.

The ant is the wonder of the insect world for industry; the coral insect, or worm, is the marvel of the tropic seas in its slow, patient building up of reefs; but the Dutchman, who is in no sense an insect or a worm, rivals them in his unconquerable steadfastness. Amid surroundings of the least likely character, among waters and mud and sands, he has created this very permanent-looking solid, thronged and bustling great city.

The greatness of Amsterdam is reared upon shipping and merchandise connected with the great Dutch East Indian possessions. Other things have

accrued to it, but that accounts for its rise from a comparatively small port, early in the seventeenth century. The visitor who is conducted through the Royal palace on the Dam will readily note the early importance of the old Dutch East India Company and those colonies and what they meant to Amsterdam, for this chief among the Royal palaces of Holland was built originally as the Town Hall, in 1648-55, and became the Palace only in 1806, when Louis Bonaparte was created King of Holland. The immense pride of the then young, powerful and newly-wealthy Dutch Republic, and that of the merchant-adventurers of Amsterdam, in those far-flung possessions is proclaimed loudly and emphatically in every circumstance without and within, of this sometime Town Hall, on which was expended about £750,000. Yet surmounting its tower is the significant weather-vane of a merchant-ship, formerly the crest of the city's arms, before it was given the right to assume an imperial crown. The state and magnificence of the interior are such that this former Town Hall and residence of the Burgemeester forms one of the richest among the Royal palaces of Europe.

Amsterdam sent forth her sons very early into foreign parts. There yet stands, on what is now called the "Prins Hendrik Kade," looking upon the water, the old round tower styled the "Schreierstoren," built in 1482. It was popularly given that name of the "Cryer's" or "Weepers' Tower"

OLD HOUSES ON THE WATERLOO PLEIN, AMSTERDAM.

because from this place departed those whom their friends expected, in those times of slow and painful voyages, never to see again.

There are many curious old-world corners to be found away from the hurly-burly of Amsterdam's chief business streets. There, where the lofty houses and warehouses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rise often sheerly from the still waters of a canal and lean this way and that, you perceive more clearly than elsewhere how Amsterdam is built on piles, and remember the quaint saying of Erasmus in respect of the place, that he knew a city where the inhabitants lived on the tops of trees, like rooks. The queerest elongated houses show, however, their odd proportions away from the water-side. Here, in the illustration of old houses on the Waterlooplein, you may notice a kind of architecture seen nowhere else than in Holland.

The Dutch, as I say, and shall say constantly in these pages, are a likeable and a polite people, glad to please ; but there is an objectionable leaven in the great populous cities. That is the way in cities populous and great and crowded. A man, intending to be rude, purposely pushed me in the Harlemmer Straat and in the side. Just one of Amsterdam's lower working-class men ; one of those friends of Mr. Troelstra, the Socialist deputy, I suppose.

That is the kind of thing the Socialist Party in Holland, as elsewhere, may reasonably be expected

to approve ; the hatred of the neckcloth for the linen collar. However, I observe that the recent first result of women obtaining the vote in Holland has been the return to power of a Conservative Government.

I returned the fellow a backhander which knocked off his cap. He took it lamb-like, although a more powerful man, and picked up his cap and disappeared. A policeman looked on, impassive, remote, non-committal.

XIV

Everyone who travels for curiosity in Holland is expected to go to Zaandam, because the hut occupied by the ship-building Czar, Peter the Great, is there. It matters nothing that he occupied it only a week. Sentiment has made it perhaps the greatest popular shrine in the Netherlands. This is a great thing in a land so unsentimental.

It is far easier to come to Zaandam by water than by road. In any case, you will have to cross from Amsterdam by ferry to the opposite shore of the Y ; and you will be far happier on a steamer with a bicycle than on those roads with it ; and will get there sooner, too. Zaandam is on the river Zaan. It is pre-eminently the place of windmills. In one glance I counted up to two hundred of them and

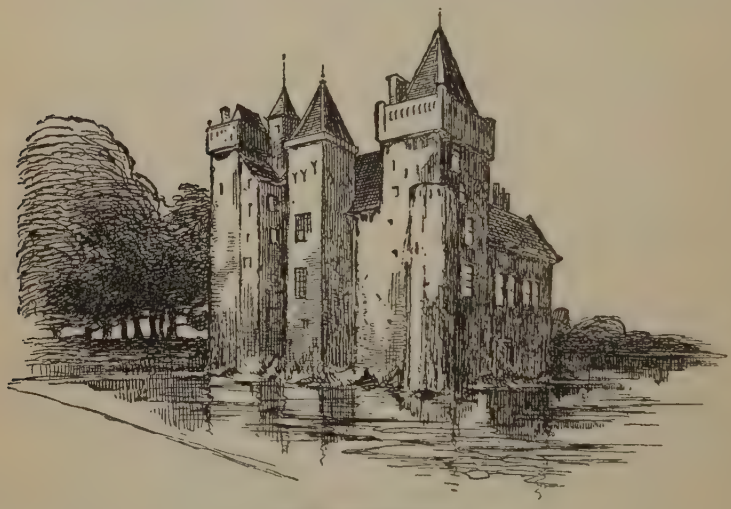
left off only because I grew tired ; not because there were no more windmills. I will swear to the truth of that, before any commissioner, if you like ; but I hope you will take my word for the truth of it, because taking an oath before a commissioner for such things now costs two shillings, in place of the modest one " before the war " ; that landmark in time and in costs and charges.

The " Czaar Peter Huisje " is not difficult to be found. In fact, it would be difficult not to be herded to it by the swarm of idlers, beggars, and self-appointed guides, who assume that no one can possibly come to Zaandam for any other purpose. And, after all, what do you see ? Just a little hut, with windows not unlike those in the stern of a ship at that period, 1697, when that amateur shipwright was here ; the flooring in billows, like the sea itself. The humble little hut is encased within an iron building, to preserve it. That was the pious work (" pious " in the Chinese sense of ancestor-worship), of Anna Pawlowna, the Russian Grand Duchess, wife of William the Second, King of Holland, nearly a century ago.

Twenty-five cents, the standard price of a cup of coffee, of entrance to a church or to anything else, see you into that " huisje," not without a dubbeltje or so to the importunate who unnecessarily show you the way.

And so, leaving the red roofs of Zaandam and the green-painted houses—when they are not painted

red—away from those whirring and beckoning windmills, past Westzaand, Zaandyk, to Krommenje. This is what the Dutch call "Holland op zyn smalst," that is "at its narrowest"; and I give you my word for it, the region may be most aptly described in the terms of a famous definition



KASTEEL ASSUMBURG.

of network as "holes surrounded by string." It is an assemblage of canals, lakes and watery polders held together, apparently at hazard, by dykes and not very good roads. The country being like that, it seems to a stranger infinitely rash to have cut two great ship-canals; the Nord-Zee Kanaal, and the Noord Hollandsch Kanaal, through it; but the Dutch, above all peoples, have the technique for that sort of thing.

I found myself, rather than purposefully making my way, at Heemskerk, and came upon a weird place, a romantically-deserted castle rising from the weedy waters of a moat. Dark trees gloomed about it. I was told it was Kasteel Assumburg. From this romantic spot I came upon a good, if sandy, road into Kastricum, whose name sounds like a possibility in the way of patent-medicines. It was here in 1799, when we and our allies were battling with Napoleon, who had annexed Holland, that an English and Russian force landed. The Russians went wandering aimlessly among the sand-dunes and were cut up by the French at Bergen, while we were compelled to take again to our ships. The Dutch, on whose behalf this expedition had landed, cautiously looked on and did nothing.

We cannot now very well lose our way to Alkmaar as then did the Russians, for the road is well sign-posted.

The name of Alkmaar means "all sea." It is even now an appropriate name, but was originally even more so. To-day it is the scene of the greatest cheese-market in Holland. Friday is the day to come into Alkmaar, if not Thursday night; for the cheese-market opens at ten o'clock on Friday mornings. There you see, assembled since an early hour, orderly heaps of those round red-skinned Dutch cheeses, and with them a proportion of orange-coloured ones too; arranged by men mostly attired in white linen suits; looking much like typical

South American or other tropical planters. Most of this buying and selling takes place in front of the great Weigh House, one of the most elaborate buildings in Holland. It gives the impression that the Dutch make business a religion ; and it is not so wide of the mark, either ; and especially appropriate here. For that impressive and beautiful building was originally a church ; the Church of the Holy Ghost. It ceased to be so in 1582, nine years after the memorable and successful heroic defence of Alkmaar against that siege by the Spaniards which, if it had resulted in the place being taken, would have meant every throat being cut. The Spaniards had promised as much ; to outdo the horrors of Haarlem. Don Frederic had written to Philip of Spain : " If I take Alkmaar, I am resolved not to leave a single creature alive ; the knife shall be put to every throat ! "

Scarcely the way to bring about a surrender ! And Alkmaar fought accordingly with a desperation unknown elsewhere in history ; men, women and children. The defence was conducted with the usual picturesque aid of molten lead, boiling water and lime ; with the highly original addition of hoops soaked in tar, set alight and flung among the assaulting parties so that, with necks encircled by these fiery girdles the Spanish soldiery were almost burnt alive ; an application of the Spaniards' own medicine for heretics, the *auto-da-fe*, ironically apposite. The assaults failed ; and then came the threat of the

dykes being cut and the country inundated. The besiegers withdrew, and Alkmaar was saved. In modern times a statue of "Alcmaria Victrix" has been raised, to celebrate this event.

We thus see that the conversion of a church into a weigh-house, soon after that siege, was something symbolic of Alkmaar's liberation. The lofty tower was added in 1599. Tinkling tunes play from it, and at noon the clock sends forth knights on horseback, who conduct a mediæval tourney.

XV

From Amsterdam the foreigner in Holland is supposed by Dutch satirists at once to make his way to Volendam. This reflection is very pleasing to the average Dutchman, who believes neither in Volendam, Monnickendam, Edam, nor the island of Marken. I will not hide it from you; by the "foreigner" the saturnine Dutchman really means the Englishman, who is attracted by the quaint old-world costumes of the fishermen and their families in those villages beside, or in, the Zuider Zee. Dutch people you will perceive there, but in the season chiefly artists, who have convinced themselves that the fishermen continue to dress themselves in their preposterous trousers, queer jackets, and fur caps because they like it, not because other people do. At any rate, they are better worth looking at than are

the diamond-merchant Jews of Amsterdam, who wear a good deal of their stock-in-trade on their persons, but do not appear to make a fetish of washing themselves.

So I will not, as an Englishman, and an explorer in search of the picturesque, flout the natural expectations of the Dutchman. I will go to Monnickendam, even unto Edam, yea, also to Volendam. But how to get there? The answer is; with a bicycle, across the Y, by steam-ferry, and thence six miles by road. But the wiser course is to go by steamer. There are steamboat trips several times a day from the quays of Amsterdam, visiting Volendam and the island of Marken; and they are well worth taking.

As for the road, a free public-service steam-ferry plies between the Central station quay at Amsterdam and the opposite shore of the Y, by which the road to Monnickendam is found. A typical continental beer-garden and gay restaurant overlooks the water on the further shore, from the old Tolhuis, or Custom House; and from that vantage-point Amsterdam looks brilliant indeed.

The less said of the abominable road for five or six miles on the way to Monnickendam the better. It is a kind of mad macadam, alongside the North Holland ship-canal. The macadam stones, painfully imported into Holland, have either never properly been compacted, or else they have for the most part worked out again. Fortunately an im-

provement happens before you come by the tree-shaded canal, very charming, to the noble church-tower of Broek-in-Waterland. Broek lies away to the left; one of the chief show villages for neatness and cleanliness in the country. But ahead is that dear old townlet of the Zuider Zee, Monnickendam; the first among those entirely charming, quiet, cleanly and bright-coloured little towns that henceforward, going north, we shall see. Here, too, the road improves, becoming smooth and brick-paved. An infrequent steam-tram lumbers into and out of Monnickendam, creating a temporary specious sort of excitement, and then the place dozes again.

I do not know who were those monks who built the dam and who gave a name to the little town. I daresay I could easily discover who they were, but I do not greatly care to know, nor would you. I have called this, because others do, a "dead town." That is just the vicious easy way of following precedent; but it is rather a town that has retired than deceased. If towns, like persons, may be said to have retired from business, then Monnickendam is one of them. There is an air of quite satisfied well-being about it, and about most of those old Dutch towns said to be "dead," that really renders the description absurd. There are shops which have all the appearance of a quiet prosperity which would almost seem to indicate that the shopkeepers maintain them solely in order to retain some little interest in affairs, mingled with a queer civic sense

that they may be of service to the community. Such a shop is the bookseller's hard by the Stadhuis. Quite a well-stocked bookseller's, as also is a larger one and printer's at Edam, which presently we shall see. My Dutch friends tell me that Holland is not largely a reading country, and yet in even small towns I find a good bookseller's shop ; while in the towns of equal or larger size in England you would not discover the like of them.

The Zuider Zee comes lapping only very gently and rather scummily into that nook of the waters on which Monnickendam is situated. By the weigh-house there are a sluice and a canal. There always is a canal or a sluice. And on the bridge is a police-man who looks in his military sort of uniform and sword like a soldier. What is wanted with an armed policeman at Monnickendam I do not know, nor, on inquiry, do the local people know, either. He looks rather like the Orange declaration, *Je Maintiendrai*, applied, with an unnecessary show of threat, to civil and provincial life ! *Je Maintiendrai la paix au point de l'épée ;* very much out of place here, even though some of the not very frequent passers-by look, in their queer costumes, with tall fur caps, like Afghan hill-men.

The rich, dark masses of trees here and there on the embankments looking upon the sea convey a sense of quiet content, even outside the town. There, across the inlet, towards Volendam, is the isle of Marken, with its " vuurtoren," or lighthouse,

THE WAAG AND STADHUIS, MONNICKENDAM.

literally "fire-tower." It is a curious name, employed in Holland; showing, as our English word "lighthouse" does not, a direct unaltered descent from those olden days when lighthouses in fact exhibited not actually lights, but coal and other fires.

On the noble and picturesque tower of the Stadhuis, built in 1591, and the chief outstanding feature of Monnickendam, there is a clock which provides many times a day all the excitements of a tournament, with none of its dangers. Like the tourney displayed by the cathedral clock at Wells, the knights come clashing out and dashing in; but here it is an open-air show, and done to music.

The Waag, or weigh-house, that inevitable feature of a Dutch town, is just below this tower, and is an exceptionally fine building among weigh-houses. Like all others, and indeed, like most old buildings, public or private, in Holland, the windows are provided with external wooden shutters, as to their lower half; shutters painted to look roughly like curtains tied back at the middle. At least, that would seem to have been the original motive, but it has been the practice so long that it has become a convention, and is now so little imitative that the original idea might almost be overlooked. These shutters are invariably painted in two colours. Not, as a rule, colours chosen by individual taste and fancy, but selected from the chief tinctures in the heraldic coat-of-arms of the town or the person to whom the building belongs.

The road out of Monnickendam soon becomes a gravelled way; a good road as to surface, and of course, level. It winds and twists along beneath the shelter of the grassy dykes that keep the sea from the polders where the cows graze. The dykes here again are high; so high that they completely shut out all views of the sea.

VOLENDAM.

At last, after making twice the distance that would be covered by a straight road, this route comes to Volendam. You enter this fishing village by rising the ramp leading to the top of the dyke itself, which here becomes broad, as well as high. It forms indeed the chief, and only, street of the village, and is neatly laid from end to end with brick. I think there is no other place in Holland like Volen-

dam. It is not, like other places, completely brick-built; and indeed almost the only completely brick building is Spaander's Hotel, which is the rendezvous of the artists of every nationality who flock here. There is no other choice but Spaander's. It is indeed said that Spaander owns Volendam and that it is he who prescribes that the fisherfolk shall continue to wear their quaint old-world costumes, which, as regards the dress of the men, at any rate, are easily the most picturesque in Holland. But, while it is to be readily understood that if those weird garments ceased to be worn, Spaander might just as well close his hotel, in the prospect that artists would no longer come to Volendam, I cannot believe that these sturdy fishermen would so submit to dictation as to what they are to wear. The truth of it all seems to lie between the fact that they like their ancient ways and find those baggy breeches comfortable and their coloured jackets pleasing to themselves, and that they find sitting to artists, on account of them, profitable.

There is a considerable fishing-fleet to be seen in Volendam harbour at week-ends; it is a very fishy place, after the manner of Newlyn in Cornwall. But otherwise, so unlike. The high dyke runs the length of the village and the little houses cower down on either side, for the seaward side of the dyke does not, for the most part, give directly upon the water. They are tiny houses, often built of wood-frames and weather-boarded, in two floors; the

upper floor entered by a wooden bridge, level with the dyke-top street; the lower descended into by brick steps. Every interior, humble though it may be, is neat and clean, and almost every house seems to have an accordion. I am not passionately fond of the accordion, but I am pleased to suppose that the Volendammers, so partial to it, have not *en masse* yet discovered there is such a thing as a gramophone.

A VOLENDAM FISHERMAN.

To-day, in all highly-civilised and cultured communities, man is the less spectacular animal in the matter of clothes. He habits himself in garments unpicturesque of cut and dull and non-committal in hue; leaving women to array themselves in hues of the rainbow and clothes of ever-varying cut. But that is not the way of Volendam, where the women's clothes are in both those matters sober and the men's a delightful extravaganza of outline and hue. If a Volendam fisherman thinks he would like

his round, double-breasted, tightly-buttoned waist-jacket, or his jacket with the open lapels, in a light pink material, he will so have it, whether he be a "nut" of eighteen years, or a venerable person of eighty, and no one will scoff, or object, or even be surprised. The only persons who object to those pink jackets are the artists, and they only when the jackets are new. The painters like the pink weathered and worn. The fishermen in the course of long years have come to understand, even though they don't sympathise, with that; and they reserve their new and more vivid gear for other than artistic occasions.

Not that pink is their only wear. Blue is favoured; and a very reserved taste will even condescend to black. But a gaily-striped shirt will perhaps neutralise the black, and great silver buttons will enrich it more than they can the gay hues. And generally a gold clasp will fasten the collar.

The tightness of the jacket is completely at variance with the roomy character of the trousers. Jacket and trousers are tight at the waist, but the pleats at the waistband expand at once to a sort of world-wide roominess. No Volendam fisherman's leg-garments bag at the knees. It would be unthinkable, nay, impossible. That chief anxiety of the well-dressed man in towns does not furrow their brows. The only person who ever visited Volendam with the object of inducing the shopkeepers to stock a line of trouser-stretchers was a traveller sent there

on a First of April fool's-errand by a heartless wag. The unfortunate man, seeing those garments, babbled wildly of sacks, and then committed suicide.

Why do the Volendam fishermen wear these divided skirts? Because they are lineally descended from the roomy garments that sailors ever have worn. They wore them, as these people do now, because when wet with sea-water or rain they do not cling to the leg, and because they give the utmost freedom of movement. Even so, the sailors of the navy wear clothes, which, if not now quite so expansive, are very wide, and wider as they go lower, so that they may be rolled up to the knees. The Volendam garments differ in detail from them, for they contract somewhat at the ankles.

A LITTLE BOY OF VOLENDAM.

The tall fur cap often, but not exclusively, worn, completes this olden costume, which may be noted, exactly the same, in the seventeenth-century paintings of Dutch artists. No wonder, then, that

painters continue to flock into Volendam in summer; or that, this being so, the men and the children of the place, and the women too, have become somewhat qualified in the course of this artistic traffic of so many years past. They see themselves as artists' models, equally as fisherfolk; and the casual visitor will find himself quietly appraised in these categories: as a mere explorer for curiosity, who is no use to them, unless indeed he may be induced to take a boat to Marken; as a photographer, whom they rather dislike because the snap-shotting camera-man can secretly take pictures of them without their knowing or being paid for it; or as an artist, valuable to them as one who is expected to pay for sittings. They are too well used to artists and photographers to be either amused or embarrassed when photographed or sketched; and indeed they not infrequently fall into poses, from sheer force of habit when such strangers appear. The children are like that, too, and are generally in their dress like little men and women, except that the little girls are more gaily dressed than their mothers; their clothes, the tight little bodice and the full skirt reaching to the ankles, are those rather of women in little, than those of children. Their brightly-coloured and elaborately-flowered old chintzes and cretonnes appeared, in the passing world-wide fashion for those materials in 1921 to indicate that Volendam and especially Marken, where they are much more worn, were aping the modes of the day which

made the girls of that season look like the purloiners of the loose-covers of their mothers' furniture. But the little girls, and the little boys up to seven years, have long been dressed like that; and so, if any copying was done, it was in a sense these villagers that set a fashion, not in cut but in dress-materials. The little boys, in identical skirts and long hair, are breeched after their seventh birthday, but until then they can be identified as boys only by the button on the cap, which the girls' caps have not. I suppose the caps sometimes get exchanged; but I do not know what is then done about it.

The visitor to Volendam had better at once take the offer of a sailor to convey him to Marken. It will save him a lot of bother; and, besides, not to visit Marken island would be unreasonable. Not so very long ago, Marken was looked upon as certainly a curious and interesting place, well worth seeing, but a little dangerous too. The one thousand or so people who live there were savage exclusives who rarely had commerce with the outer world, except to sell fish and the hay grown on the island, for which they have no use, as they do not keep cows; and to purchase in return, sheer necessaries. They were, and are—there is no mystery about it, though it has been made one—descendants of those remote Frisians who dwelt in the land which was drowned by the irruption of the sea in the thirteenth century; and they remained in their isolation very

averse from contact with the modern world, so near and yet practically so far removed. Dark

A LITTLE GIRL OF MARKEN.

tales of rash people who landed on that isle being warned off it were current. The islanders were not

like the equally savage and uncultivated people of the industrial districts in Staffordshire a century ago, who used to say: "Here's a stranger; fettle 'im; heave half a brick at his head." They did not throw bricks, because a brick is rather a precious thing on Marken and not to be wasted. Bricks there pave the rather infrequent paths that lead to the tumps and mounds on which the houses were built originally for security against those times when the Zuider Zee should inundate the island; a frequent happening. Strangers were threatened with being thrown into the sea; which was a practical method, and did not waste material. That was not perhaps so much ill-will as an exhibition of the old sturdy Frisian independence; but it did not make a visit to Marken popular. We shall, later on, visit Friesland, where the people are yet independent in manner, and speak a language of their own, Friesch; but I hasten to add that they do not offer you personal violence, and are indeed quite well-disposed. I thought this ought to be mentioned.

But that is all a thing of the past. The people of Marken to-day welcome the stranger. They know they are picturesque; and they know, too, that picturesqueness is to-day an asset out of which something is to be made. And they make it. There is, year by year, a constant succession of tourists who come to Marken and fall in love with quaint old articles of every sort which have been heirlooms, so these sophisticated folk would have you believe,

for centuries, and yet were made the year before last, in some industrial centre and sold to the islanders just for the purpose of catching the simple stranger. With tears in her eyes some island woman will sell some alleged long-cherished curio; and on your next visit you will see the exact like of it, to be sold, with similar tears.

Dutch people are singularly touchy about Marken and Volendam and their customs and costumes. Indeed, about old-world Dutch costumes and customs in general. A Hollander—a typical one—will so passionately declare that his country is not the kind of quaint and curious land it is, that the traveller who has been elsewhere, but never there, will have some wild sort of an idea that all these things are myths, invented by artists; or, at the very least of it, that the queer costumes are only stage-properties, so to say, just as are the old Welsh feminine costumes to-day, worn at fancy-fairs, or reproduced on picture-postcards, but not really used nowadays.

But no; nothing of the sort. The country regions of Holland are yet rich in all this sort of thing. It is nothing of which to be ashamed; but rather to be proud of; and it is not readily to be understood why there should be this fierce denial of that which every tourist can see to be yet plentifully existent. The reason may be that the typical Hollander is a very up-to-date business sort of person; well educated and resentful of any implication that *all* Dutch folk

dress in those old-world ways. No-one, I think, ever suggested so much. But he is hurt, all the same. He cannot deny Marken or Volendam, and so his bias leads him to be satirical at the expense of the visitors who throng there.

The houses of Marken are all of wood. The church and the pastorat are the only buildings of stone, and there is but one tree on the island, an anæmic poplar. The wooden houses are as strange as the people, for they are largely built on piles and in some cases overhang the water, with ramshackle outside balconies. A Marken man may indeed marry outside the island, but a Marken girl, it is said, never.

All are fair-complexioned, with straw-coloured hair, and mostly with piercing blue eyes. You can identify a man of Marken anywhere, by his costume ; very like the Breton dress ; consisting of a flat wide-brimmed hat, tight jacket and enormously baggy breeches. Not the " divided-skirt " trousers of the Volendam men, but breeches to the knees showing the stockings from knees downwards. The colour of their dress is generally a sombre black, or brown. The women form a complete contrast and are like birds of gaudy plumage. A richly-flowered cretonne-like material is the chief note of it ; the whole surmounted by a lofty headdress which often appears to consist of a tube of cardboard covered with the same sort of material, or varied with lace and embroidery. There are compromises with this archi-

mandrite kind of headgear, ranging down to a mere cap ; but all the women, from girls to grandmothers, wear their hair in the same fashion ; a straight-down fringe over the forehead and a great rope of hair coming down in front, over the shoulders, on either side. The old dames, who no longer possess the great ropes of hair do by no means abandon this

FISHERMEN'S HOUSES, MARKEN.

immutable Marken fashion. They employ silk instead ; and they look extremely giddy old dears, too. It will hurt a Hollander's feelings to say it, but, being a trustee for truth I cannot help recording the fact that popular excursions by steamer from Amsterdam are just as well patronised by the Amsterdammers as they are by my own countrymen ; indeed, more so, because, after all, not so very many English holiday-makers travel to Holland ; and it

surely would not pay the steamboat proprietors to run for so small a handful. No ; Marken is just as much a raree-show for the conventionally-clad Dutch citizen as it is for the stranger. Sometimes, indeed, they have the show for nothing and without the trouble of going to seek it ; when the Marken folk come shopping into Amsterdam. Great crowds follow them, for they come in their odd costume for the simple reason that, being poor folk, it is the only sort of dress they have. They cherish it, and make their clothes to last a lifetime, or more. Some of the women's dresses are, in fact, of a very considerable age, and with the most elaborate and curious embroideries. So, in truth, while the Hollander will so angrily declare that " comic-opera costumes " are not worn, often they are. For what is generally the costume of comic-opera but the reproduction of the queer dresses of other countries ? After all, strangeness is only the unusual and unconventional. If the conventional dress of cities were put in the place of the old costumes, and the position were thus reversed, that would be found comic indeed, and ugly as well.

XVI

Not much more than two miles from Volendam is Edam, by the distance of nearly a mile recessed from the Zuider Zee, along a quiet, tree-shaded canal,

bordered with lawns ; one of the sweetest and most charming scenes in this country where there are many scenes of beauty.

This " canal " is the river Y, from which Edam took its name, originally spelt " Ydam." Why it has been changed, in the course of time, while the Y sluices give a name to Ymuiden, so spelt, is a paradox beyond the competence of the stranger to solve.

When we find a canal in Holland that is not a canal, but a river, we do not know the difference, because the Dutch have such a way with them when it comes to water that by the time they have quite finished with a river there is nothing in the least wild or untamed, or even amiably vagrant about it. So we have to accept the word of the guide-book when it tells us that any formal-looking water-way is a river. Thus to work upon Nature is a necessity of the country ; for to leave a river in Holland to itself would be to have all the sur-roundings very soon under water, and the river itself a lake.

Because it is really a river, I suppose, is the reason for the canal at Edam being so deep and so broad and so beautiful. Now and then a little steamer comes up to the town along it. Quite a pretty and an interesting scene. Someone on deck blows a horn, and up go the two leaves of the " ophaal " bridge to let it through ; the process being repeated at the other bridges on the way.

The Dam is the centre of the little town of five thousand inhabitants; one-sixth its former size. There is the Dam Hotel, and there, too, a queer, very broad bridge across which the brick-paved road goes in a vast semi-circular swoop. It is the paradise of loafers on warm days, for there are seats.

Edam is, of course, famed for its cheeses, the round, red-painted sort, whose crimson-lake is familiar enough in England. The yellow ones come from Alkmaar. But "Edam" cheese is not merely cheese made in this neighbourhood, it is a variety. There is a cheese-market on Fridays at Alkmaar, where week by week, half a million pounds' weight of cheese is sold; including perhaps more Edam cheeses than are sold in Edam; for Alkmaar is the largest cheese-market in Holland.

There are the quaintest and the cleanest and the smallest of charming old houses along the waterway aforesaid, to the sea. Often they bear interesting little sculptured stone tablets of the seventeenth century. Here and there, between these houses, are buildings where the round cheeses are stored. If it be summer, the windows will very likely be open, and you can see the cheeses stacked away in wooden racks, with the greatest of order and precision.

Through Oosthuizen and Scharwoude goes the way into Hoorn, the little town and harbour nestling snugly in its sheltered bight.

No one will feel inclined to satire of the Englishman

HOORN WATER-POORT.

who from Volendam and Edam proceeds to visit Hoorn, that charming town of some 11,000 inhabitants (but it looks larger), also seated on the Zuider Zee. When in 1616 William Schouten, a native of this town and port, discovered a passage round the most southerly point of South America he named it, after his native town, "Cape Hoorn"; but in the modern spelling few ever suspect that origin of the name. Looking at the map, it is generally thought that it is descriptive of the horn-like projection of the cape itself. But, curiously enough, Hoorn seems to have derived its own name from the horn-shaped curve of its harbour-mole.

From the sea, under any aspect of light, Hoorn looks as romantic as any city of dreams; its towers and spires rising so delicately and gracefully. There in the foreground is the Water Gate, its high-pitched roof and slender spire less rollicking and rumbustious than the usual fantastic imaginings of the old Dutch architects. Nor at close quarters does Hoorn disappoint you. Its streets are full of queer gables with delicately-rendered details and with old shops still carrying on the same kind of business they were engaged in three hundred years ago. You may see that it is so by the odd little carved stone tablets over those shops; over, for instance, the little cheese-shop pictured on page 149. By that sculptured work you perceive that even in the seventeenth century they were interested in cheeses. Crow-stepped (or, as the Scottish say, "corbie-stepped"),

gables; or, alternatively, steeply-pitched roofs covered with great red pantiles, form the most characteristic sky-lines in Hoorn, as the illustration of the "Little Cheese Shop" sufficiently-well discloses to you; while the shop-fronts commonly are extremely lofty in proportion to their width, and in

MARKET PLACE, HOORN.

relation to the rest of the building. Here is colour for the painter and curious outline for the draughtsman; together with abounding interest for the tourist who is content merely to observe and be amused, with never a thought for transferring his observations and impressions to canvas or to paper,

as an artist, or by way of writing. The old weigh-house in the Market Square is also a fine feature.

All over Hoorn, in shop-windows and in those of what look like private houses, you see the word

THE LITTLE CHEESE SHOP, HOORN.

"room." Sometimes it is what seems to be "roomys"; but on closer inspection it is seen to be "roomijs." This appears to the stranger who has no Dutch to be like a vast Hoorn hospitality;

as though most people in this picturesque town were letting apartments. You murmur to yourself the lines in the Moody and Sankey hymn :—

"Yet there is room, all joy, go in, go in."

But it is not accommodation for the stranger and the pilgrim they are offering, but cream and cream-ices. Some of these places are what we would style "dairies" or milk-shops, which in Holland are "Melk Salons." Only, if you require milk, it is practically necessary, to be understood, to pronounce the word "melluk." And if you seek the church, be sure to call the "kerk" the "kerruker." It is easy enough to identify the chemists' shops by the goods in the window ; but the chemists do not leave that to chance. That chemist's shop is rare in Holland which does not display over its doorway a "Gaper." All the "gapers" bear a very strong likeness to one another. They are the turbaned head of a Moor, widely opening his mouth, as though ready for pill or potion.

But the most eminently-desirable and delightful of these old towns is Enkhuizen. Charming as it is from any side, I love best to come to it by steamer from the other shore. Crossing the thirteen miles of the Zuider Zee from Stavoren, that almost the least interesting place in Holland, the steamer brings you quietly into Enkhuizen harbour, as into some little city of old romance, so quaint and lovely is it,

ENKHUIZEN: THE WATER-POORT AND DROMMEDARIS TOWER.

There rise the great Drommedaris Tower and water-gate against the sky, with the beautiful tower of St. Pancras, the Zuiderkerke, in the background. You are almost sure to hear the sweet carillons of them across the water, for they play not merely every hour, but shorter snatches at the quarters. Those of the Drommedaris Tower are the most beautiful in Holland; or almost the most beautiful, let us say, in fear of reproof and in case some reader has an affection for others. I know not what old Dutch airs they play, in their thin, tinkling chimes, not unlike the performances of musical-boxes; but they bring romance and sentiment, and a centuries-old beauty into this striving era.

The guide-books will tell you that Enkhuizen is utterly decayed, that grass grows in its streets, and that now not a single fishing-smack enters its harbour. That is very odd; for no grass grows in those well-kept streets; and surely I was not mistaken in fancying I saw many fishing-smacks and other vessels in that harbour. Also there is a fine and a busy railway harbour-station at Enkhuizen; and at my hotel there were commercial travellers. Such as they do not pay visits to dead towns. But once upon a time Enkhuizen was much larger. The Enkhuizeners have, however, put that historic fact away back in the lumber-room of their minds. They realise that they are living not in a town of 40,000 inhabitants, as once this was; but in one of 8,000. But at the same time they know

that the figure of 8,000 is creeping up towards 9,000. In short, the place is prosperous in its quiet way ; and there are even new banks and a fine recent "post-kantoor," which is to say, a post-office. "Kantoor" is the Nederlandsch variant of the French word "comptoir" ; and the Dutch prefer to use it always for "office," instead of "bureau."

Of the three remaining gates of this once-fortified town, the Koepoort, the Stavoren Poort, and that by the haven, over which the great Drommedaris Tower so picturesquely presides, this last-named is chief. It was built in 1540 ; grouping as it does with the shipping, the queer old pantile-roofed houses, and the drawbridge, it forms the chief picture in the town. Over its gateways, enriched with sculptures of martial emblems, are the arms of Enkhuizen : three golden herrings on a blue field. Conspicuously on the outer wall hang two anchors. They are relics of a naval battle fought between here and Hoorn in 1573, when Admiral Bossu, the Spanish Stadtholder, was defeated and taken prisoner by the revolted Dutchmen. They kept him in prison three years. They have his drinking-cup at Hoorn, his sword at Enkhuizen, and his collar at Monnickendam.

XVII

THERE is a kind of comedy or comic-opera island, an imitation St. Helena north of Enkhuizen. It is that little island not far from The Helder, just within the Zuider Zee, in a region of Holland little travelled, in which it has seemed good to the Netherlands government to intern the former German Crown Prince. I am not greatly concerned to know if my term "intern" is the exact form in which political jurists would phrase this sort of residence; the effect is much the same, if indeed the phraseology may possibly be technically inexact. At any rate, there the ex-Crown Prince has been for four years or so; and anyone who has visited Wieringen Island will not suppose him to be there from choice. There, however, it appears likely he will remain.

The Dutch are not keenly interested in this guest of theirs. In fact, they are not interested at all. They seemed mildly amused at the idea of anyone being at all curious to see him and his place of retirement, when I proposed to go there. It is easier to come to Wieringen by boat from Amsterdam than to win to this remote place along the roads of the Helder peninsula; and the good folk of Enkhuizen from which town I purposed to set forth on a bicycle to discover Wieringen Island were in fact, not quite sure how one got there by that method, or what

the roads were like. It seemed to them a tremendous enterprise.

As a matter of fact, it is thirty-five miles from Enkhuizen to Ewijksluis (pronounced " Evikslouse "), that tiny village on the mainland ; that infinitesimal port from which you take the post-boat, a little steamer, for the island, which is about two miles off-shore.

The road from Enkhuizen begins with a specious and deceptive ease and smoothness, through the Koepoort ; one of those brick-paved roads of Holland which, like the little girl who " when she was good, she was very, very good ; but when she was bad, she was horrid," are excellent when in good repair, but when neglected are abominable.

You proceed through Hoogkarspel, Westwoud, Benningbroek, Sijbekarspel, Winkel, Kolhorn, Wieringerwaard, and Tweeweg, and come thence to the aforesaid Ewijksluis. Enkhuizen's suburbs, to Hoogkarspel, are inhabited by a Roman Catholic population. It is a sort of Roman Catholic enclave in a country almost wholly committed to the Dutch Reformed Church ; that Lutheran variety of the Protestant faith. Not even the most unobservant stranger could fail to note that this is a Roman Catholic region ; because, very oddly, nearly all the glass panels in the house-doors bear crosses and Catholic inscriptions.

These roads take an amazingly-eccentric course, past ditches that turn off at right and left angles,

and now on high dykes above the Zuider Zee, and then along roads below it. After passing the scattered villas of Wieringerwaard, where a kind of garden-suburb has sprung up in these remotenesses, near the railway station, you come past Tweeweg to that very negation of the picturesque in scenery, the levels of the Anna Pawlowna Marshes; reclaimed lands named after a former Queen of Holland, a Russian Grand Duchess, wife of William the Second, early in the nineteenth century.

It is bare, treeless country at Ewijksluis, and the high dykes shut out from it even a view of the sea. A dozen houses, the sluice, and an inn sheltering behind the dyke; that is Ewijksluis. Climbing the grassy dyke, you see Wieringen Island out there, by contrast very picturesque; for its few trees have at this distance the aspect of woodlands, and the tower of Westerland church rises strikingly from them. The sea is extremely shallow, and the navigable channel is marked out by lines of stakes, crested with osier baskets.

Arrived at Ewijksluis, there is nothing to do but to stare over towards that view of the island, or else go to the inn. It is a simple place; the natural resort of all who wait the arrival and departure of the post-boat. No need to inquire when it has arrived, for the skipper inevitably comes in for his little drop.

The post-boat is about the size of a Thames steam-tug. Not very large. It makes for the one

little port, Wieringen Harbour, with its long stone and timber pier and the usual forest of masts of schuits and other fishing-vessels. On the quay, among the usual quayside groups, a policeman, a gorgeous spectacle in light-blue and silver, one of the four police on the island, awaits the arrival of the boat, takes polite charge of the casual stranger and escorts him a mile and a half to the Burgemeester of the island at Hippolijtushoef, one of the four

WIERINGEN HARBOUR.

villages. The others are Oosterland, where the ex-Crown Prince lives, Westerland and Oever.

If you have a passport, all is well at the Burgemeester's.

"You haf noding to do with der Kroon Prinz?" he asks you in the few words of English at his command; and, being satisfied that you have no political mission, you bid him good-day, and leaving him and departing from the polite policeman, much to

the disappointment of a group of interested spectators, baulked of any sensational developments, seek an hotel. There is but one, the De Haan; simple, clean, unpretending; but, like most places in Holland, provided with up-to-date appliances, and electrically lighted. It has even a bioscope picture-show.

Wieringen Island is very soon seen to be a region commonplace in the extreme. There is no romance about it. The villages are not pretty, nor do the villagers wear quaint costumes; and the island must be almost the one place in Holland where there are no canals. It is about six miles long by three and a half broad. One might spend half a summer's day there and exhaust its every interest, and never again wish to see the place. The population is about three thousand. There are a good many motorcars about, too.

The industries of Wieringen are fishing, agriculture and selling picture-postcards of the ex-Crown Prince. This last is a new industry but it shows already signs of decay, because few strangers ever visit the island and the islanders can see Little Willie any day, if they want; and generally when they don't want, too. So *they* don't buy the picture-postcards. I suppose the ex-Crown Prince purchases most of them himself; because he is a great distributor of them, duly autographed. By this time there can scarce be any man, woman, or child on the island who does not possess at least one.

But, although Wieringen is distinctly not a place for the tourist, at this time it is of interest to any person with imagination, because the man who wanted the war is there ; and is there because of it. He was somebody, and is now no-one in particular. Think of it : the German Crown Prince was heir to the throne of the German Empire, and thus, in the future would have been German Emperor, and one of the personages most to be reckoned with on this earth. Had that war been lost by the Allies, he would certainly, in time to come, have been the greatest personage ; not because of his own personality, but by reason of his inherited position. It does not in the least matter that the Kaiser and the Crown Prince were little-minded men in big situations ; but that they had the power. They have lost it, and are out of the world's calculations. There is no martyrdom of these fallen personages, except that of being sheer nonentities ; although that of itself is very great. That of the Kaiser, guarded at Doorn, is the greater, and he renders himself additionally contemptible by his replies to appeals for help from the families of those who were maimed in his service by whining that his funds are exhausted, and sending picture-postcards of himself as War Lord, instead of help. But the lot of his heir is the worse. He lives on Wieringen all the year round, without his family, in an ugly little house at Oosterland, numbered 10. It was the pastorat ; or, as we should say, the vicarage. There is a

great grim church near by, and a scattered number of small houses, and a modern farmhouse far better than his own.

I could not resist sketching this abode of fallen greatness, not for its own charm, for it has none, but for its present curious interest. My doing so was evidently noticed from within. There came out, at intervals, one after the other, a little girl with a toy dog in her arms, walking up the road to the farmhouse; a man-servant, looking rather shop-soiled and moth-eaten; and then the I Was, the ex-Crown Prince, with a brown, snuff-coloured dachshund by his side and a paper portfolio under his arm. The once All-Highest-But-One rather scowled at me.

"Yes," said I, "I'm sketching your house; are you flattered?"

He said he was not.

He ought to have been; but the world is just like that.

"Englishman?" he asked. "And what interest do you find in Wieringen?"

"Yourself."

I think this was somewhat flattering. For myself I thought of that time, not so very remote, when, in the war, I should have been afraid of this man, and of the power he wielded. To-day, there is no-one like that. None to be afraid of.

"Is that a paper you have in your pocket?"

"It is; a London newspaper; at your service."

"London!" he said. "It brings me back to the days I had in London."

"There are those," I replied, with subtle meaning, "who would like to bring you back to London."

In point of fact, the remark has two meanings. He ignored it—or them. Indeed, I think he scarce heard me, for his gaze was fixed meditatively on the distance, to where the summer sun was shining on

OOSTERLAND.

the sea. Somewhere beyond lay that proud isle where live those antagonists who had shattered those dreams of "welt Politik," those ambitions of him and his, and had brought him to this Robinson Crusoe sort of a place.

"How do you occupy the time? I rather wondered what the devil you do all day and every day all round the calendar, on Wieringen."

"Oh, walking, motoring. I think I know every stone on the island."

"You may well do that," I ventured; "it's mostly mud."

"——And one makes one's self pleasant to the people."

"So I see. You are an amateur blacksmith, and make horseshoes."

"It is something to do, yes....And people like to have them as souvenirs....Also I give away signed picture-postcards....And exercise always. A man must keep fit."

He looks fit. Tall, and still slim, although just over forty—and a German. Not very happy-looking. The smiles are for when he is facing the camera. They are for publication. In repose, the face is almost sad.

"People like me here, you know," he remarked, challengingly, as though he expected to be contradicted.

"That is because you give away those signed postcards and distribute those horseshoes, with your initial stamped on them....But you ought not to have an imperial crown over it now, considering——"

"Mind your own dam business," retorted the All-But, angrily.

"Oh, well. We'll let that pass."

"And I do a good deal of sketching....Didn't know I was an artist, did you?"

"I don't know it now. But as an amateur, not bad. They showed me at the De Haan Hotel a portrait by you, in coloured chalks, of the hotel-keeper's daughter."

It is so. And they have there one of the aforesaid horseshoes, with the crowned "W" and a card sealed to it on a piece of string, together with a statement that it was made by the fair hands of

"SCHOPENHAUER, KOM."

himself. Moreover, you may buy, together with all sorts of picture-postcards of him, talking to the sailors and fisherfolk, one which shows him in the act of making such a shoe in the smithy at Hippolijtushoef. Rather an appropriate place, too, when we remember that the village with this gro-

tesque-looking name is so named after St. Hippolytus, who filled, according to tradition, the not very saintly office of colt-tamer. He was martyred by being torn to pieces by horses, at Ostria, in Italy, A.D. 252.

Great and enterprising is English business. Nearly all the picture-postcards on Wieringen are issued by a well-known English firm.

The ex-Crown Prince was more hurt by the half-hearted commendation of his efforts as an artist than by anything else one could have said. He went off in a huff, calling to his dachshund :—

"Schopenhauer, kom."

And that was the last I saw of him.

That very bored exile, sick of weary Wieringen, speaks English perfectly, and looks very little like a German. Nor does he look or give one the impression of being the silly person of the caricatures, with the hanging lip and sheepish look of idiocy we are asked to believe in. On the contrary, the impression is that he is a far more able man than that clever fool and essentially little person his father. The ex-Crown Prince is a well-set-up, athletic-looking man, who has the appearance of being the sportsman he has generally aped. He dresses there in riding-breeches, white woollen sweater, and leather gaiters. The only German-looking item is the flat-topped, peaked cap.

One might almost find it in one's heart to be sorry, even for him, exiled away from anything

that matters in life, in this unattractive place. The Allies could have found no punishment more severe or more exquisitely appropriate for him.

XVIII

Even as these words are being written, the last days of the Zuider Zee are numbered. It has been in existence, as a sea, six hundred and forty years; creating that peculiarly recessed coast-line of Holland, with its outline of islands, like the vertebra of a spine—the islands of Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland, Engelman's Plaat, and Schiermonnikoog; and the further islets, accounted German, at the mouth of the Ems; Rottumer Plaat, Rottum, Borkum, Juist and Norderney.

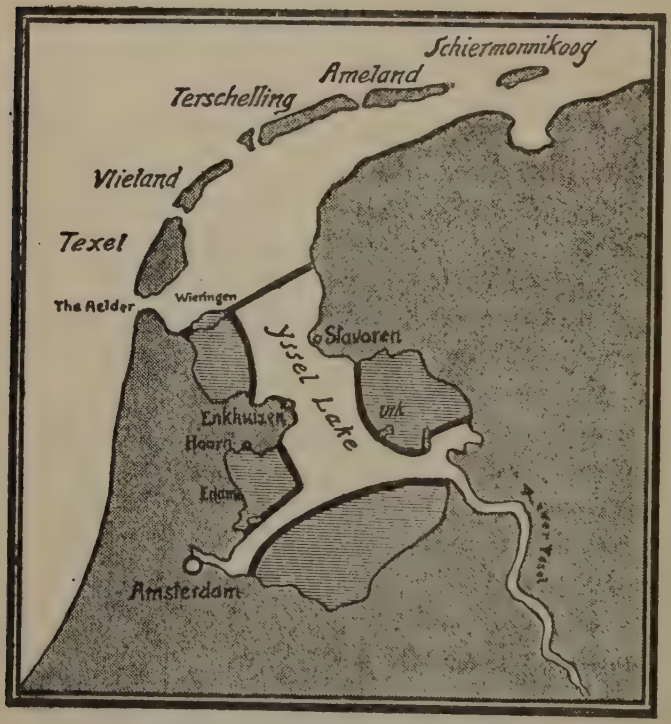
All these islands, now forming a kind of outpost group, represent the original coast-line, and the channels between them are the places where the sea broke through in 1282, converting what was once the great Frisian lake, Flevo, into an inland sea which, though shallow, can be stormy and even dangerous, and dividing Frisia into the sundered provinces of East and West Friesland. Six rivers flow into the Zuider Zee, rendering its waters hardly more than brackish and encouraging a growth of weed which, under the name of "pampus," has in

its shallower parts to be vigorously kept cleared away.

The Zuider Zee is thus, although apt to be on occasion a turbulent water (eleven people were drowned on it from a steamship at Zwolle, in a storm, as recently as March, 1922), not a sea navigable for vessels of deep draught ; and the city and port of Amsterdam, which stands on the estuary of the Y (or the Ij), at its south-western extremity, was, with the continued growth in the size of ships, obliged, if it would keep its trade in face of the competition of Rotterdam, to construct the two ship-canals to the Helder and to Ymuiden, completed respectively in 1825 and 1876, and since then both deepened and widened.

The area of this sea is 1932 square miles. From north to south it is 86 miles long ; and 54 miles broad from east to west at its greatest breadth, the whole comprising about 1,236,500 acres. A large portion of this great expanse was once land, fertile and with many villages, all drowned in the invasion of the sea in 1282. The hereditary genius of the Dutch people for reclaiming land has long looked towards recovering much of this by embanking the sea-entrance and draining. This began to take the form of some deeply-considered schemes, when, at the close of the Napoleonic wars and the growth of commerce and increase in the size of ships, it became evident that the Zuider Zee was no longer of much economic use. For that to be evident was,

in view of the Dutch character, the first step towards considering the abolition of it. The heroic idea of filling in the gaps between the islands has never



RECLAMATION WORKS ON THE ZUIDER ZEE.

seriously been considered; for although the tourist coming to Holland by steamer on some calm summer day may be astonished by the shallow and narrow channels between some of these isles and the difficulty of threading a passage between them, the

wild gales of winter put a different aspect on affairs.

The present scheme for ending this sea is that of the Zuider Zee Association; a project definitely sanctioned by the Netherlands States-General in June, 1918, and now actively being proceeded with. The first step is to construct a dyke from close by Ewijksluis to Wieringen Island, and thence across to Stavoren; a length of 18¾ miles. Thus will Wieringen cease to be an island. Provision will be made for thirty sluices, to carry off the waters of the six rivers. It is estimated that these dykes will take ten years to construct.

The second portion of the works will be the dyking-in of much of the drained land, leaving a lake to be called, from the largest of those rivers, the "Yssel Lake," as a reservoir. That will occupy another twenty years. The land thus to be reclaimed will be an effectual area for cultivation of 500,000 acres. Estimates for these works amounted before the Great War of 1914-18, when prices were low, to £20,000,000; but it is not now considered that they can be done at less than double that sum. Economically, the undertaking is on those terms thought to show actually a heavy loss; but the view of the Dutch Government is that the enterprise should be undertaken, having in mind the difficulties of food-shortage experienced during the war. That does not appear to be a very sound reasoning, for it seems to be pretty well established that that food-shortage was caused by the export

of food-products to Germany; and by the same reasoning, if the like circumstances were to recur, say in forty or fifty years' time, the practical result would be that the Dutch farmers would in the first instance have all the more to send away; leaving, as before, the minimum residue for home-consumption.

No, there are better arguments than that for reclaiming the Zuider Zee.

Of course, it is evident that in the course of these works the fishing industry of the Zuider Zee will be destroyed, and that the seaports of Hoorn and Enkhuizen will lose much of their interest; while Volendam's queer existence will be a thing of the past. Marken will no longer be an island; baggy breeches will have no reason for existing, and except that they are picturesque and attract the tourist and the artist, the quaint customs and quainter dress of those parts will disappear. All these people will have to be compensated; but who is there will compensate the tourist and the artist?

It behoves the traveller, then, to make acquaintance with these survivals while there is yet time.

XIX

Landing at Stavoren, from Enkhuizen, you find yourself at a quay and a railway-station, and, for

all the rest, a very modern village of one street, extremely quiet, with a canal along the wide empty space. Stavoren, in its present guise, is a place of yesterday. There is not even a church old or new, unless a small undistinguished little hall may be so considered. You would think Stavoren had no past. But it has. It is, in fact, the deadest dead town of the Zuider Zee ; so dead, and so long since, that the body has been lost.

That was at the opening of the thirteenth century, seven hundred years ago. Stavoren was then a great port of Friesland. There the princes of that then independent country had a palace. But the harbour was gradually obstructed by sand and so the place utterly decayed. There is no trace of it. Sand-banks still extend in front of the Stavoren of to-day. The chief of them is the " Vrouwen-zand," whose name embodies an ancient legend which seeks to account for old Stavoren's decline and demise. The story of it is that the proud wife of a Stavoren merchant, grown offensively wealthy, desired the captain of one of her husband's merchant-ships to bring back for her, on his next voyage, " the most precious thing in the world." The people we meet with in these old legends have always that vague, but commanding, way with them. I do not know when it ceased, but I suspect it must have been a very long while before my time.

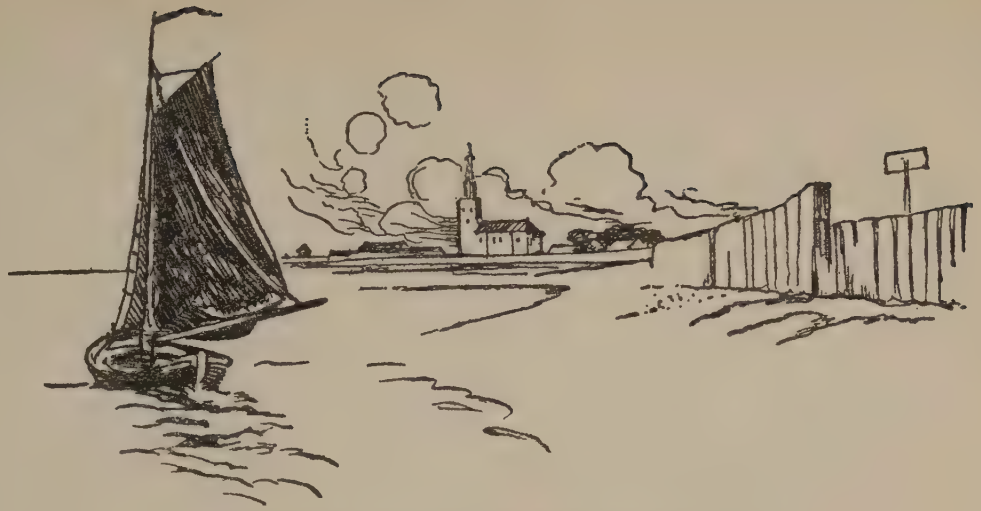
The captains, too, of that era don't seem to have been in the least like any merchant-captains I

have ever met, or authentically to have heard of. A very strange skipper, indeed, believe me! He did not refer the matter to his owner, the lady's husband; nor even ask for the credit for purchase, much less seek to know what exactly it was the lady would wish to have. He used his own imagination and discretion, and came back, according to the story, with a cargo of wheat from Dantzig. The tale then goes on to say that the furious woman ordered the wheat to be thrown overboard, at the harbour-mouth, where it sprouted and formed the original sand-bank; thus fixing upon the community a Divine curse for wasting "the most precious thing in the world."

I perceive that another version of this exceedingly moral tale declares that the lady was a widow, which may explain, but does not excuse, all these things. And a harbour-master of to-day, and possibly even of those times, would have something to say about a captain jettisoning cargo off the harbour-mouth.

The immediate neighbourhood of Stavoren is as empty of interest as that place itself, but soon you come under the lee of the dykes into Hindeloopen, through infinite gates.

The palisades of the sea-dykes by Hindeloopen are spectacularly tall and stout; and have all the aspect of a stockaded fort, embattled against an enemy. It is thoroughly in keeping that they should have that appearance, for the sea is the



HINDELOOPEN, AND THE PALISADES OF THE ZUIDER ZEE.

enemy, and one always to be guarded against. Down below, on the sands of the Zuider Zee, you perceive nothing but that stockade and the sea, and a wide-spreading sky; and in the distance the saucy-looking lofty steeple of Hindeloopen church. Close at hand are the steps leading up to the "Bad Hotel"; a title which seems fearfully unpromising, unless you know that it means the "Bath" hotel. Even knowing as much, there is always, to an Englishman, a pleasant ironical flavour about the name, as there is about that of the several "Dam" hotels in Holland. And at Scheveningen, the Brighton and Yarmouth and Scarborough of Holland, all rolled into one, it is a perfect joy to see an inoffensive-looking person on those sands wearing a red jersey which is embroidered in large letters "Badman"; just as though he were a public example of iniquity, instead of being just a bath-attendant.

Hoorn and Enkhuizen are decayed from a former greatness, but not recognisably so in any save that relative sense. If we desire really to visit a "dead city (or rather, town) of the Zuider Zee," it is Hindeloopen we must visit. There it stands, behind the wooden palisaded dykes, defended by them in its shrunken, hoary decrepitude, reduced to the condition of a quiet village, and still fading away. There, however, is the great church; and there too, is the Stadhuis, or Town Hall, with its little figure of a lion outside, clutching an armorial

shield with the Hindeloopen arms—a deer, leaping—a pathetic relic of an old dignity.

"She is the Town House," said a fisherman, who, like every Dutchman with a little English at command, was eager to show his learning. He pulled a dried herring out of a capacious pocket, and bread and onions out of another, and munched them with a tremendous relish. "I am in England," he continued, between tremendous bites, "I am in London many year, and I spike the Engelsch, as an Engelschman." That is the superstition which all Hollanders who have a few words of English cherish.

I left him to his convictions and entered the church. The koster—or the kosteresse—for it was a woman—was expecting this and the customary twenty-five cents, without which fee no House of God is open unto you in this country, where even the humble dubbeltje is sought with much spirit. The church bears this fervent exhortation!—

"Das heeren woord
Met aandacht hoort
Komt daartoe met hoopen
Als hinden loopen."

Which is to say that the parishioners are invited to come to church to hear the word of the Lord, heartily and with leaps like those of the deer. It is, you see, a play on the name of the place, Hinde-

loopen. But I have never observed any Hollander, no matter how pious, leaping like the hind to church,

OLD DOORWAY AT HINDELOOPEN.

or anywhere, for any purpose. It is not done in this staid land, where movements are, by a long way, more deliberate.

The interior of Hindeloopen church is, like that of most Dutch churches, bare and spacious, and severely dealt with in the way of rigidly-suppressed ornament. And, also like most Dutch churches, it is kept locked. Almost always you must seek the "koster," the custodian or sexton, to come and unlock it and receive twenty-five cents; and then you will find, after sampling a good many churches that it is only exceptionally they do not exhibit internally precisely the same features; lofty cylindrical columns, which, like every other part, are whitewashed to a dazzling whiteness; a great bare nave, and in the choir or chancel, where we would expect the altar to be, no altar, but seats for a part of the congregation, instead. That is a typical Dutch Reformed Church practice. The churches are, in fact, rather more preaching-halls than churches.

I do not think there is much enthusiasm about church-going here. It is a habit. When the Dutch secured at once their spiritual and national independence, they grew tolerant, and a little more. Holland taught religious toleration to the world. You may profess and observe here, as almost anywhere else nowadays, any religion—even of a fancy sort—or none at all; and no-one cares, one way or the other, to interfere. But Holland was the first to be so liberal-minded. After all, the greatest religion in Holland, the most intense conviction, is that of the necessity of keeping the waters out.

HINDELOOPEN CHURCH AND STADHUIS.

In a land below the sea-level this is readily to be understood.

It is customary to sentimentalise over the little Dutch towns, decayed from their olden wealth and power. Interested as we are in their ancient glories, we need not regret their decline, for only thus could we find preserved their architecture and decoration. We have heard much talk of the "dead cities of the Zuider Zee." Much of that is nonsense. The ancient towns (not cities) are not dead, but sleeping, and dreaming of their great past. Speaking of them generally, they are neither poor, nor shabby. If you would find shabbiness and poverty, go seek and find them abundantly in any rich and populous and increasing modern city; say, Amsterdam or Rotterdam, to say nothing of imperial London. The quiet old towns of Holland are in slumber; or, to change the figure, they are like some busy man who, at the close of a strenuous career, is taking his well-earned rest.

At Workum, to which we now come, a place not so far gone in decay, but just a sequestered village, you find a dignified square with an enormous church tower, and a weigh-house, and a stadhuis bearing the arms of the "State of Workum." That phrase gives the key to the olden standing of these individualistic towns: scarcely less than that of all-sufficing little states.

It is not so very long ago, in the historic sense, that these places still kept a considerable trade,

So much may be read in their architecture. In the quiet streets of Workum, as of Bolsward, there is a great deal dating from the middle and later years of the eighteenth century; the characteristic exuberant and rollicking design and decoration of the rococo and baroque sort, which gives you the humorous impression that the koekjebakkers (that is to say, the confectioners) of those periods, between 1660 and 1780, had turned architects, and had brought into their new profession the decorative sugar designs of their former trade.

How self-contained and individual were not only persons in Holland, but also trades and corporations, we may find again in this church of Workum. So they lived their lives, and so they died and were consistently carried to their graves. Here each trade had its exclusive bier, and here they are yet, carefully and elaborately painted with the emblems of their trades. The blacksmith's body was carried on a bier painted with hammer and anvil and horseshoes; the carpenter's saws and nails and compasses advertised his occupation; and so on, with the sea-captain's, with ships in full sail; the chemist's, with pestle and mortar and a skeleton; and one for children, rather touchingly painted with the Good Shepherd and His sheep.

XX

To cross the Zuider Zee from Enkhuizen to Stavoren and thence to Friesland is to pass into a region very different from South Holland. It is the country of the Friesland meres, where the canals and rivers broaden out into vast lakes, always shallow but yet sea-like. They are sailed by strange varieties of craft:—tjalks and praams, and others with the oddest of technical names, consorting nowadays with motor-barges built of iron but still keeping a good deal of the old lines, and painted with the like gaudy colours, and named often after the old Dutch naval heroes. Often you will see the name of Piet Hein, that old admiral of whose wonderful exploits mothers still sing to their children. Grouw stands on such a Frieland mere, with its great brick tower finished off with saddle-back roof, forming a noble picture from the water; the tjalks and schuits and other quaint rigs clustered about it.

Centuries ago, when Holland was in the forefront of art, science, colonisation, and trade—those times when the Dutch were in advance of ourselves in most of these things—almost every province of the Netherlands was possessed of numerous thriving towns, rich in enterprise, commerce, society, and all the amenities of life. We may almost declare each of these towns to have been a self-sufficing unit, an independent community, owning but little

allegiance to the country in general. This was an order of things induced largely by the natural difficulties of communication, but even more by the peculiarly independent character of the Dutch people. Hardly shall we find elsewhere than in Holland that keen individuality which made of each town a little state. Early they had acquired that intense civic consciousness which has come so late, and by no means so markedly, in England. The great populous modern English town remains in many cases just a huge overgrown and formless village, which has its Town Hall, its Corn Exchange, and other public buildings, it is true, but rarely possesses any civic centre. Scarce any one has that usual feature of even the smaller continental towns—the Grand' Place, where you may stand and realise the town. No, study the plans of English towns, and you will find the streets going in every direction, apparently without purpose. Only in modern times, and at great cost, and not often with conspicuous success, have improvements been made which have given some sort of dignity to those streets of ours; and, even so, when some kind of centre has been achieved, in the face of vast expense and much opposition, it is neither adequate nor of any shape known to geometry. The city of Birmingham is, perhaps, the prime instance.

At Bolsward, in this same district of Friesland, we find this queer tablet on a house; "Zo is Het" (which means "So it is") "1519." The original

WORKUM.

house is gone, and so, evidently by the style of lettering, is the original tablet. Here we find a charming little town of 6,500 people. Its brick-paved streets are quiet and extraordinarily clean, and a steam tramway runs through the chief of them. Bolsward might be accounted a "decayed" town,

A CANAL STREET, BOLSWARD.

but its cheerful aspect declares that, if, indeed, it were once larger, it is perfectly happy and sufficiently prosperous in its present scale. It is the ornate and beautiful Stadhuis, if not also the great fifteenth-century Martinikerk, filled with the monuments of nobles and wealthy traders of centuries ago, which in no uncertain manner advises you

of a former greatness. The Stadhuis was built at a somewhat later period, 1614-16, and is in the Flemish variety of Renaissance architecture, built (as of course in Holland) of brick — red brick, with stone sparingly used. There is no other Renaissance building in Friesland so fine. The stately stairs leading up to the entrance from the street are flanked by elaborately designed lamps, embellished with horned satyrs' heads, of a somewhat later style. Indeed, the stairs seem to be, as a whole, together with the lamp-standards and their plinths and the curious staircase balusters, a work of the rococo period. It is difficult to imagine these delicate lamps, designed so daintily, with their remarkable satyrs' heads, having withstood the buffetings of an open-air position so well in all those years of their existence.

I remember Bolsward so particularly well because of several intimate things that have nothing to do with architecture or antiquities. One was the sight of a man in the street with an ice-cream barrow. I saw him through the window of the warm room of an hotel, where I was taking a cup of coffee. He had on a straw hat and a white linen jacket, for it was early summer and he an optimist. And being early summer and yesterday having been hot, it was now extremely cold, with something like snow falling. Nothing seemed more unlikely than selling ice-cream. Hot baked potatoes would have been more likely. But, although the ice-cream man had a

red nose from the cold, and shivered, he was not unhappy. He knew the quality of the small boy,

STADHUIS, BOLSWARD.

who is as conventional a being as any "grown-up." He sold his ice-creams, right enough; because,

whatever the circumstances, it was the season for such. Even so do marbles and hoops and tip-cat have each their proper season; and no small boy would so fly in the face of the proprieties as to play them out of their respective times.

The other reason for remembering Bolsward has also to do with small Dutch boys. Of course, in any case the stranger in Holland has to endure in most small places deeply-interested groups of people who stand solemnly staring and saying and doing nothing. But these two small boys outside the Martinikerk were more enterprising. At the sight of a cyclist with riding-breeches they were raised right out of the usual Dutch stolid silence; and shouted "Oude flapbroek" (which, being interpreted, means "Old flapbreeches") and ran away. If they had wished to be even more amused, they could have found a great deal more entertainment at Volendam or Marken, where bags and breeks are of a flappiness that defies competition. I presume they never had been there.

If you wish to make direct from Bolsward to Leeuwarden, the best course is to proceed to Sneek. There is a good-enough road by way of Franeker, but it curves and winds and doubles on itself as though it had just found the way, and with some difficulty, too.

All the country between Stavoren and Sneek is an intricate network of meres; a region that

would prove a paradise for a frequenter, for example, of the Norfolk Broads. Mere is joined to mere by canals, and it is easier to go from place to place by sailing-boat than it is to travel by road.

Sneek, at the head of one of the principal naviga-

WATER-POORT, SNEEK.

tions, and on the Sneeker Mere, is a busy little town. Its name sounds unpleasant to the English ear, whether you pronounce it phonetically, or in the Dutch manner, "Snake." It still keeps one of the most picturesque of the many picturesque and beautiful water-gates in Holland; but the town itself

is disappointing, largely because we soon, travelling in Holland, become accustomed to expect so much in the way of beauty and antiquity. There is a great deal of prosperity in Sneek, and there has been much rebuilding—building by men who wanted to be picturesque and striking and thought sheer uninstructed riot was sufficient. The modern elevations in the business streets of Sneek have all the rollicking Dutch licence without the old taste; and they present an extraordinary exhibition of gables with windows that open only on to the sky, of pillars that support nothing, and decorative swags that seem to have been either the designs of children or the visions of nightmare.

The road from Sneek is remarkable for nothing. A brick-paved road, with an avenue for most of the way, it goes past villages without special feature and enters Leeuwarden through a suburb of some style and immense respectability, but otherwise not striking. But if you will take the trouble and spare the time for it, there will be found, east of the road, half-way between Sneek and Leeuwarden, the queer old place on the road to nowhere but to itself, Grouw; a town already referred to in these pages. The name of it is, in print "Grouw," but it is not in the least like that in speech. In asking a Friesländer the way to it, inquire for "Hurrah," and you will at once get as near the local pronunciation as it is possible for an Englishman to do, and you will be understood. If you pronounce it as spelled,

STAIRCASE TO THE STADHUIS, BOLSWARD.

you will be answered "Ik kan het niet begrijpen," which means, literally, "I can't grasp it."

Grouw stands on a mere, not interesting in itself, but forming a charming picture from the water.

XXI

Friesland, with one exception, is not that part of the Netherlands where you will find quaint costumes. That one exception, an astonishing one to the stranger, is the old fashion, still greatly followed by the middle-aged and older women of the village and peasant class, of wearing the *ooryzer*, or golden helmet. This is in the nature of a skull-cap, made of thin plates of gold and fitting exactly to the back of the head and coming almost to the forehead. To wear this ancient covering it is necessary for the hair to be cut close. That is the chief reason why the young women of the present day will not follow this ancient custom. At each side of the golden helmet, above the ears, are decorative plaques of the same metal. Over the helmet is worn a lace cap. One of these astonishing head-dresses will cost 2,000 guelders, or about £150. Most of them are heirlooms, handed down for generations. Those who have not been able to afford the gold *ooryzer* will have a silver one.

But the most remarkable lack of taste and under-

standing is seen in these old women going to market not merely in their strange panoply, but with the helmet and its covering lace cap still further crowned by some rusty old black bonnet of the dreadful type usually worn by low comedians in pantomime. These ancient dames, however, consider the effect to be rather stately. But in the village street, or on the farms, when without their appalling state bonnets, half a dozen of them walking along glitter in the sunlight like a squadron of Household Cavalry ; and if you see in the distance on the farms some flashing point of light in the sun, like a heliograph at work, be very sure that it is not military signalling, only someone wearing a golden helmet and catching the sun's rays.

Just as there is nothing outside of England to compare with the winding English roads and luxuriant hedges, so there is not anywhere else than in Friesland any kind of farm building quite like the farmsteads in that part of the Netherlands. The Saxon "halle" type of farmhouse is, however, a distant cousin to them.

I say "the Netherlands" advisedly, not "Holland," because although Friesland is a province of the kingdom of Holland, and not easily to be distinguished by the stranger from the rest of that country, yet the Dutchman who is a Frisian will not style himself a "Hollander," and when he leaves his northern province (or his "country," as with a particularist patriotism he would style it) for the

GROUW.

south, he speaks of "going into Holland." Even so, a Welshman, and some Cornishmen, travelling from their own parts, will be "going into England."

Thus we see that the Frisians are a people. They have a language of their own—"Friesch"—and customs, and a sturdy independence; the heritage of olden times. For "Friesland" means "Free-land." It follows then that Friesland, which is that part of the Netherlands extending north-east from the northern shores of the Zuider Zee to the borders of Hanover in Germany, must have many individual features. Chief among these, to the eye of the traveller, is the characteristic "boerderij," or farm-house. Even the least observant person cannot fail to be impressed immediately with the "haystack house," which is the essential shape of the Frisian farmhouse. The absolutely flat and sparsely-wooded character of the landscape itself lends an extra-ordinary prominence to these buildings of so peculiar a plan and elevation. They are, in their general lines, all alike, differing only in size and some not very important details.

This is a vast pasture land of dairy farms, peopled with farmers, and unmingled with other industries; and the dyke-divided meadows are teeming with cattle of the famous black-and-white Frisian breed. Few things are more certain than that in this land, coming past the many little wayside inns, you will see frequently the signs of the "Bonte Koe" or the "Bonte Os," which mean the "Spotted Cow"

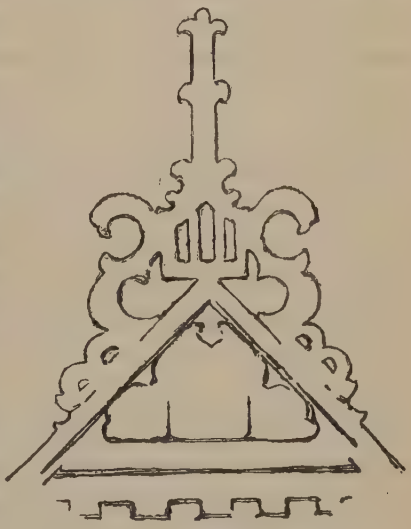
or the "Spotted Ox"; so intent always are the folk of these parts upon this, their chief interest.

The Frisian farmhouse merits some detailed notes. Its general haystack or great barn-like outline is the outward and distant sign of a singular internal economy; of an ordered and all-comprising logical arrangement evolved in centuries of experience. The idea is to have everything contained under one roof. Thus, the ground-plan consists of a fore-

SIRTEMA STATE.

building which is the farmer's dwelling-place, with drawing-room and living-room on either side of the front door, and bedroom and kitchen behind. Between these runs a passage conducting directly to the cow-stalls. In these stalls in a double row stand the cattle when not in the meadows, their heads toward the outer walls; and in most farmhouses there is a window to each animal. In Holland the cow is the lady who pays the rent, and

is therefore treated with respect. Nothing in this neat and housewifely country is more amusing than to see that to each window is generally a little linen blind, daintily finished off with a lace border. The cows usually, in this land where corn is not much grown and straw is therefore scarce, lie without straw bedding, on brick floors, somewhat hollowed to their shape. They are used to it, just as the Japanese people are so accustomed to wooden blocks for their heads instead of pillows, that they feel no discomfort; and just, presumably, as the criminal gets used in a long term of imprisonment to his plank bed.



FINIAL TO FARM ROOF.

From the cow-stalls a passage conducts directly into the great hay-barn. Hay is always stored in Holland under roofs instead of in stacks in the open. Within the wide overspreading roof of this barn are located also the many incidental items of the farming business: carts, ploughs, harrows, etc. The Friesland farm has nothing in the nature of a

muddy farmyard such as in France and England, where the manure lies in heaps and the farmer and his hands go squashing about in filth. Every little detail of practical cleanliness is thought out here. The brick flooring, for instance, of the cow-stalls is laid sloping to a central gutter, and in the constant washing which is a feature in all the Netherlands, in every department of life, the farm manure is reduced to a liquid state and stored in tanks, and in that condition is afterwards distributed over the fields.

This peculiar type of farming economy is derived from the necessities of the country ; a land where the winters are long and severe, where it is not possible in those months to adventure much out of doors. Each homestead is then like a besieged fortress and, equally with fortresses expecting to be beleagured, they are all well-provisioned against the enemy. There is very little going on out of doors at this season, except it be for the favourite Dutch sport of skating.

In most of these farmhouses the farm hands sleep in the cowshed, and in the smaller and older ones the farmer and his family may still, as in a more simple generation frequently they did, use one end of it as a sitting-room. So, to the Dutch painters of old to represent the Holy Family in a stable or cow-stall, following the lines of Scripture, seemed to be rendering an ordinary domestic interior.

This practice would nowadays be unthinkable

in the conduct of farms in other countries, but in the Netherlands it is not so remarkable, having regard to the extraordinary neatness and cleanliness prevailing. Not infrequently, indeed, ailing and tuberculous children are sent into the country from towns to live in the cow-stalls of these wonderful farms, and so gain health by inhaling the sweet breath of the cows and partaking of the generally fragrant warmth of these interiors.

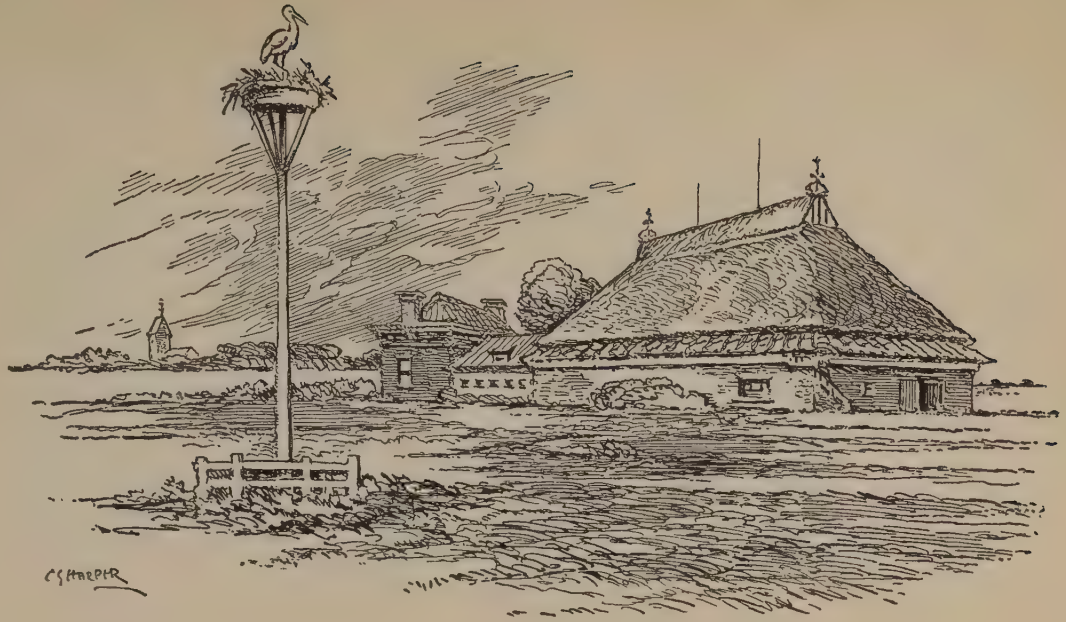
The eaves of the typical barn and cow-stall roofs come down to within some seven or eight feet from the ground. They are thatched roofs, generally of reed, and the thatch usually comes down to about two or three feet of the eaves, the intervening space being covered with pantiles. This is not so much a fashion as a plan in connection with catching the rain water. The roofs being of so great an area and so steep a pitch, a large quantity of water is thus gathered and very quickly thrown off at each shower, and it is greatly prized and conserved, for in the Netherlands generally, and in Friesland in particular, although the country is so waterlogged, drinking water is scarce, and rain water is commonly used for domestic purposes. There are few wells or streams, and outside the towns scarcely ever a water supply. Reeds for thatching do not, as a rule, come from the dykes and canals which are plentiful around the farming districts, but from reed farms.

Just as the type of roof is so little varied, so also are the gable ends, always finished off with an

ornamental finial in wood, generally with a "swan-neck" motif, and not uncommonly with the swans' heads duly outlined and painted with eyes as well. The subsidiary details of the decoration exhibit more freedom and individuality, but they do not alter the general effect.

The chimney-stacks in Friesland are peculiar, and nearly always of the same type. They are surmounted with a kind of muffle, partly for the purpose of preventing the heavy snow in winter from descending the chimney, and in part to make it impossible for the storks to build their huge nests of sticks in them. Not that the storks are discouraged. They are, indeed, considered lucky; and a feature in the Dutch landscape is the tall post on farm or common, especially built for the storks to nest there, on the platforms with which these posts are provided.

A usual farm accessory is, of course, the fowl-run. The Dutch variety of this customary feature is amusing to the stranger, but the arrangement is logical enough if the details are indeed laughable. The "hinnerin," as it is called, consists either of an external pen, or not, according to individual ideas, where the fowls are either cooped up or are permitted to wander at will. But in any case they go upstairs to roost among the timbers of the barn at night and descend in the morning. The amusing part of it is this little staircase, or inclined plane, running up into the eaves from the ground, up the exterior wall. It is always daintily made, and may



THE STORK'S HOME ON A DUTCH FARM.

be enclosed within brightly painted sides or equally gay-looking palisades. If solid sides, instead of palisading, the woodwork often will have little glazed windows. These windows are placed here pre-

THE HINNERIN.

sumably for the fowls to look from. It is the last word in delicate consideration, and compares with the courtesy which gives the cows windows furnished with lace-edged blinds.

Toujours la politesse!

Friesland farm architecture exhibits few and non-essential changes in the newly-built farmhouses. You find, it is true, that the modern farmer does not commonly live to any extent in the cow-stalls. The larger old farmhouses have still those curious bedrooms that were once an invariable feature of domestic life in every stratum of Dutch society: those bedrooms where you see no bedsteads; where the family climbed up into cupboards for the night into their box-beds, and closed the folding-doors definitely upon the outer world. In the modern farmhouse, and often in the old ones where the present generation have up-to-date ideas, the bedstead in the room itself is now seen.

The general lay-out of a new farmhouse will, however, be on those traditional lines which have been found good and embody the accumulated wisdom and practical experience of the country. The illustration here of "Sirtema State," at Engelum, near Marssum, shows the general appearance of the house on a large cattle-breeding farm. It was built in 1909, and is in every respect modern. Belonging as it does to the trustees of the very wealthy Popta charities, it was erected from an ample purse, and is in no way stinted. But exceptionally in this building, although its lines are the old conventional ones, the roofs are wholly tiled with pantiles instead of being thatched. The three tall rods seen

springing from the roofs are those of lightning-conductors, usually a prominent feature in these districts; just as also is the curious decoration at the gable ends, with swan-necked device ending in a finial. Here, too, at Sirtema, the cows are littered down on straw, and they face inwards.

But whatever the age or size of these farms the house exhibits always what to an Englishman is more or less a curious air of gentility. When, examining one of the farms, you stand facing its front elevation, it looks not in the least like anything an Englishman would expect a farmhouse to be. It is never picturesque, rarely homely-looking, but always with a curious pretentious formality, and looking very French and decidedly of an urban rather than of a rural type. It is rather as though some typical city man had retired into the country and decided to turn farmer, building himself a house whose front elevation should be all neat brickwork with gauged joints, and polished front door and flanking windows of plate-glass. Glance through the windows of a typical wealthy Frisian farmer's house and you will see that the furnishing inevitably accords with this kind of exterior. Plush or velvet-upholstered furniture is the sum of it, together with showy mirrors. You need not be chary of glancing through those front windows. No-one ever is in those rooms, unless indeed it be on Sundays. They are state-rooms, for dignity, rather than to be used.

Going southwards, the Frisian type of farmhouse becomes a little modified. In the Hoorn and Enkhuizen district they are more ornate. The windows and the brass furnishings of the front door have more spit-and-polish ; the gateways and palings are more ornate, and the thatch is sometimes elaborately patterned. Also the gardens within their moats are generally planted with something garish, such as scarlet geraniums, or calceolarias and lobelia. Most farmhouses, as indeed, most country houses in Holland, are moated. Once I contemplated writing and illustrating a book on moated houses in England ; that is to say, I made a list of them. You could more easily make a list of the rural houses in Holland that were not moated and write a book on those without moats as the curious exceptions.

But if indeed the farmhouses in Holland are not picturesque, you cannot lay that charge against other kinds of buildings. From private houses and shops, up to town halls and churches, they exhibit every variety of invention, from modest beauty up to flamboyant extravagance. There is a robustious invention and extravagance of outline in most Dutch architecture which in its way recalls the rollicking humours of the peasants in the pictures of Franz Hals, Van Ostade, and Teniers. The queer domestic gables, elaborately curved and convoluted, the gay colouring of the window-shutters, the bulbs and onion-like protuberances and nameless excrescences of the towers and spires of town halls and churches

are all the results of that rollicking, boisterous Dutch spirit which is a revolt from, and a protest against, the eternal flatness and tame nature of the country's physical geography; a kind of revulsion, in fact, from the consciousness that it is the very negation of scenery; that their land is less a part of the continent of Europe than the rinsings of it, an ages-old alluvial deposit brought down by the Rhine and other rivers. "Our country," they seem to have, more or less consciously, thought, "has no physical individuality; we will be individual, with a national character, and so indeed shall our architecture."

And in truth, although Holland is a small country, the Dutch are a great people, of well-marked individualities; and their art, whether in painting or in architecture, is an independent expression, a something which owes no allegiance to alien influences.

XXII

In these vast level stretches of the northernmost part of the Netherlands this country of farms and black-and-white cattle, is an old Dutch country house I know. It lies between that seaport of Harlingen of which your tourist to Holland by way of the Hook, or other popular means of approach,

has never heard ; and it is some fifteen miles from the sea, not so far from the town of Leeuwarden, which is the capital of Friesland. Actually that town is three miles distant, but in this region of flat country, with few intervening trees, and so clear and ambient a sky, you can see plainly its chief buildings. They are the great tower of its ancient church and the soaring spire of the modern Roman Catholic church.

Leeuwarden, this capital, numbers some 45,000 inhabitants. It is the centre of the cattle-marketing activities of the province, and these people think and talk about little else than those spotted Frisian kine. You read in Shakespeare " How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford Fair ? " Thus asks Justice Shallow at his house in Gloucestershire ; and the price of cattle in Leeuwarden is also in that place the beginning and the end of politics.

Guide-books—or, at any rate, one guide-book—would have us believe Leeuwarden to be a " dreary " town. That is not so ; it is a lively town, and quaint and beautiful. And it is a town of colour, which you could not say, honestly, that such towns so well spoken of as Delft and Dordrecht possessed. They are grey and withered ; age-old and haggard. Now, Leeuwarden is at least as old, but the sap has not died out of it ; it is not sad, nor grey, nor withered.

I have, however, at present, nothing to do with towns, but with the country. I am seeing it, not as a tourist, living in hotels, but in a Dutch country-house, staying with friends who, although not Eng-

lish, speak my language with fluency. It is true that, like all foreigners, and even like the Scottish people, they are at odds with the words "shall" and "will"; and direct my doings in that imperative tense, without in the least intending to command. "You *shall* go to Leeuwarden to-day" does not, therefore, mean the compulsion it seems to be; and when we arrive there and go shopping, and a shopkeeper, intending to be polite and, at the same time, to air a few words of English, says heartily and with emphasis, on your entering his more or less distinguished shop, "Good-bye, sir:" he intends no insult, nor to convey the impression that your custom is not desired. He means a welcome "Good morning!"

But that is the way in Holland. People there like to talk the English they can't speak, so to say. And you don't visit Holland just for the purpose of hearing grotesque English spoken.

This old moated country house, the home of landed families for so many centuries, is the last of its kind in this region. The other old families either are extinct, or landless now; or, more likely yet, they are no longer content to reside, as did their forebears, in these extremely quiet and remote surroundings. They have, at any rate, disappeared, and this is the only "State" left. That term is the one used for "estate," with a slight difference in meaning. It indicates the house as much as it does the land that goes with it. Sometimes the word "slot" is employed, a variety of the German

" schloss " for " castle," whether the house be like a castle or not, just as the French use indifferently the word " chateau " for castle or country villa. If the residence is very definitely like a castle, it will generally be found so called, in the Dutch variety of spelling the word, " Kasteel."

There is no society here for the " edelgeboren Heer," the man of long descent and culture. Such as he must needs have resources within himself or be extremely lonely ; for he will not mix with the farmers, especially not now, because the farmers, who are all war-time, and post war-time, profiteers, and are now more wealthy than the old families, are not cultured ; only ostentatious, in their motor cars and the showy but not tasteful conditions of their homes.

The house and estate have not changed hands since 1496. Always the place has passed by marriage of an heiress, and thus in the picture-gallery there still hang portraits of fifteenth-century owners of it, with those of the succeeding generations until now. The Dutch have ever loved their portraits painted. Some of those here are beautiful and dignified. There is one, a full-length of a little girl (Margaretha van Unia), hanging in Mijnheer's study. I love her, although I do not know her history. An inscription on it says, " Aetat suae 7." She lived in the sixteenth century. The painter lavished much care on her dress ; it was the way of those old Dutch artists. She wears a richly

A DUTCH COUNTRY HOUSE: DEKEMA STATE

brocaded costume, with skirt down to her feet, like a little woman, and in her right hand she holds a doll, as elaborately dressed and just as meticulously painted. The light falls tenderly on her, for this room is a typical Dutch interior, the windows tall and narrow, and curiously shuttered, so that the light comes slanting down into it, as you see in the interiors painted by such Dutch artists as Teniers, Vermeer, De Hooch, and others.

There is much old blue-and-white china in this house, both Dutch and oriental, and there are many curious relics. In the attics, which are themselves like great rooms, light and dry, some long-forgotten object always rewards a search. Unfortunately for those who love the mediæval and later styles, on two occasions, in 1700 and 1800, Mijnheer's ancestors conceived the notion of bringing their old home up to date. At those times, and especially in 1800, anything old was held in contempt. Thus a good deal of the interior is remodelled in " Empire " style. Not wholly, because I gather that it was found too costly an enterprise.

So not much remains of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Just some brickwork at the back and some old carved stones in the cellar. What became of the materials from the older house ? Buried somewhere, no doubt.

And thus most of what remains of those ancient people is their recorded mode of life. Rather a fierce and arrogant way they had. I have a note

of how one lord of Dekema, one Rienk Tjaerda, in 1498, feeling annoyed with the townsfolk of

WASHING IN THE MOAT.

Leeuwarden, went out one morning, casually as it were, with thirty of his retainers, and burnt a dozen

or so of the houses there, and killed a few of the burghers as well. Not, it seems, an exceptional incident. Just, no doubt, to show the Leeuwarden people who was who and not less what was which so to say. But this arrogant raider was besieged by the angry burghers in return. I do not know what was the upshot of it all. But it shows how useful, nay necessary, it was to have a good broad and deep moat round the house. It is useful yet, for, like most moats in Holland and the canals, however dirty their water, washing the household linen is generally done in it; and it is surprising with what dazzling whiteness it emerges from that dubious liquid.

The moat is there yet, happily for sake of the picturesque. Fish live in it, and water-lilies flourish, and wild ducks skim its surface. And a wooden bridge, with gateway locked at night, crosses it, in a spectacular manner, with little stone lions sitting up on their rumps and holding shields in their paws, with the family arms on them. Over the gateway you read the inscription, "Tankje God yn alles."

It is an L-shaped house, built, as are most buildings in Holland, of brick, with the usual pantile roofing, and the chimneys with muffles over them. These are surmounted by great gilded and pierced armorial vanes.

Fortunately for the English visitor who does not speak the Dutch language, there are plenty of

English books in the house, or how, on rainy days, should he pass the time ?

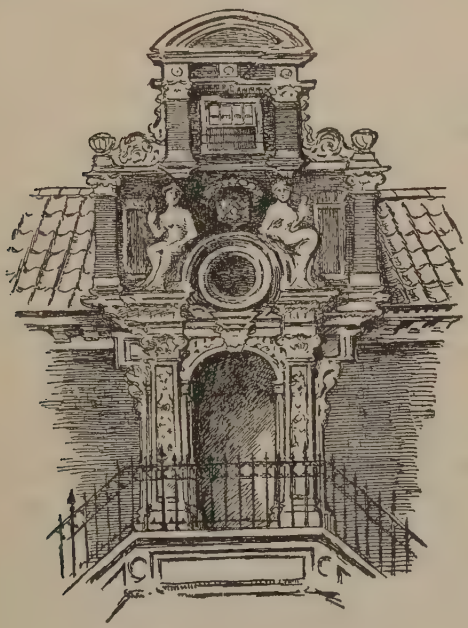
Breakfast, " ontbyt," is generally over soon after nine o'clock. We had better then, glancing at the quaint old Dutch clock in brass, with its pierced front of Renaissance design, which is the conventional style, hung with a silken scarf, go for a walk through the village, leaving Mevrou to her servants and her

DRONRIJP.

housekeeping. Crossing the bridge over the moat, we come to the avenue of tall lime-trees, past a memento of the Great War, an English mine, retrieved off the coast near Harlingen, before it could do any damage. It is a formidable-looking sphere of cast-iron, painted a dull red, and standing some three feet high.

The village adjoining is small and scattered.

Beside its brick-paved roads are either small dykes or a navigable canal. The church of dull red brick, with tall tower, completed with a saddle-back roof, is ancient but scarcely interesting, and very grim and gaunt. It is almost exactly like every other



ENTRANCE TO THE POPTA SLOT.

village church in these parts, and it is built on a mound, ever so little raised above the general level; one of those "terps" which were formed by the prehistoric folk of these districts as sites for their original settlements, against the danger of being drowned out by sea or other floods. They are simply,

in their origin, heaps of clay, dug from the surrounding flats. Most of these Friesian villages have names ending in "um": Jelsum, Marssum, Kollum, Dokkum, Workum, to infinity. The termination means "home." Even more marked are the Friesian personal names, ending invariably in "a." The changes rung upon Dekema, Sirtema, Troelstra, Postuma, and hundreds of others are amazing. Alma Tadema, that anglicised Dutch painter and Royal Academician of some years ago; a social and artistic success, was a Frieslander, born of farming folk at Dronrijp, between Harlingen and Leeuwarden. A very charming decorative bronze tablet by Sir George Frampton has been placed over the door of his birthplace in that village. But where is the great reputation of Alma Tadema to-day? Not, at any rate, where it was.

Tadema was, in fact, a prime example, as a painter, of national heredity. He had all the old Dutch painters' bent towards imitative brush-work. Where they rendered domestic pots and pans closely, with faithful sheen and high lights on polished copper and crockery, he applied the same care to marble in the Roman subjects he chiefly affected. But otherwise, he was far inferior to they, as an artist, and was rather more of an archæologist in paint than a painter.

At Marssum, on the Leeuwarden-Harlingen road, before you reach Dronrijp, is the Popta Slot, the ancient moated castle residence of the Popta family.

It is not precisely what we would understand by an ancient castle. It is more. The term carries with it an implication of something mouldy, although interesting; an archæological specimen infinitely intriguing but not desirable as a residence. But the Popta Slot is very much more than that. It is a palace of antique art, fully and beautifully furnished with lovely old things. The Popta family, with those who went before them here, is extinct, but if they came back, they would find their old home just as they left it, in every particular of beauty and comfort. Dr. Popta, the last of his race, towards the close of the eighteenth century left his property and all its widespreading lands as a charity. I believe it to be the richest charity in Holland. The magnificent building has been conservatively restored, and is a recognised show-place. To it is attached an almshouse. The Dutch are kind to their poor old people, as will be seen all over the country, in their " gasthuisen " for the oudemannen and oudevrouwen. You enter the Popta almshouse by a fine architectural gateway in the baroque sort, with two figures supporting a shield of arms surmounted by a coronet. It is a characteristically Dutch composition, and among the best of its kind.

It is a pleasant road on to Harlingen, through Franeker. A quiet, clean little place is Franeker, with a police-office next the Stadhuis bearing the word " Polizie " on a blind in a kind of shop-window,

as though police were a kind of delicacy sold within. And there is a "Planetarium" which you may see. It is a working model of the celestial bodies, con-

THE ZAKKERDRAGERSPIEPKE, FRANEKER.

structed by one Eise Eisinga, 1774-81. I was very pleased not to see it.

Such is Franeker. There are the usual canals

in the streets, and the rows of clipped lime trees beside them, and the Groote Kerk, and a beautiful Stadhuis, dating from 1591. Many a quaint gable adorns those streets. At Franeker, too, was a university, which existed from 1585 to 1811, when Napoleon suppressed it. And there is that delightful little red-brick building, dated 1634, on the "Zakkerdragerspiepke" (I apologise for the terrible name :), the "Little Bridge of the Grain Porters," pictured here.

Harlingen, that northern and not greatly-known little port, trading with England by way of the Thames, is a queer, gusty, wind-blown place, full of colour. Yellow sands, grey seas, red and white houses, and the vividest of red roofs. There is not so much of Harlingen as there would have been had not the sea swallowed up a great portion, centuries ago. Since then, opportunities for expansion have not come the way of these northern ports.

XXIII

To go of a morning into Leeuwarden from the country house of which I have written was rather an entertaining and an intriguing programme. From these pastures and dykes, where the frogs croak, and the snipe whistle their plaintive cries, to cycle into the town was like going into a metropolis, so

complete was the contrast. A very little metropolis, it is true: in population the size of our Richmond in Surrey, but looking much greater. In their every circumstance there is contrast; for, of course Richmond is a London suburb; and there is nothing suburban about Leeuwarden. It is a complete unit: a provincial town, and yet with a something that does not suggest the implications of the English word "provinciality." That is an effect, no doubt, partly of its fine and handsome old public buildings, but more of its community, which is firstly agricultural and cattle-raising, it is true; but with a good backing of the professional classes. The life and the shops of Leeuwarden are, one would say, far livelier and of a better style than in the average English provincial town of the same size. I would like to find a comparison between Leeuwarden and Hereford, although by population Hereford is one-third smaller; because of the cattle-market that means so much to both; but the comparison, architecturally, is not easy, nor indeed in other matters. Leeuwarden is a town of many canals and no river that is recognisably a river; Hereford is a cathedral city on the river Wye, but with no canals. But both are bustling and lively, and both have that professional and retired private element which gives a dignified aspect to those quarters where it is to be found.

Here you will see something very characteristic. Not exclusively characteristic of Leeuwarden, but

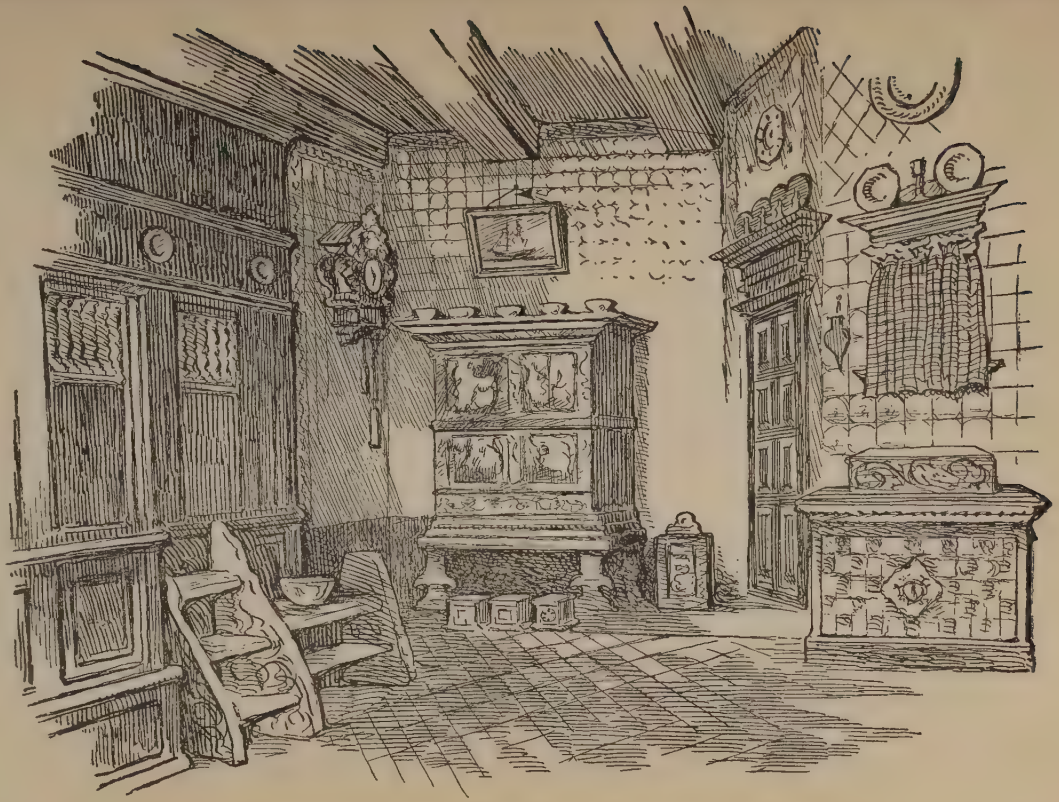
typical of the quiet streets of many another place.

Among the smaller features of a Dutch town, at least in its quieter residential streets, the spionen are prominent. I do not suppose Dutch ladies and private or professional people are more inquisitive than the same kind of people in England; but they are more systematic and methodical in their way of getting to know what is going on than they are in England; and they are not so obvious as the inquisitive Englishwoman, who peers from behind blinds and curtains upon what may be happening in the street; and gives herself much unnecessary trouble in doing so. The Dutch people have reduced the knowing of what is proceeding outside their houses to a fine and leisured art, by the aid of mirrors set outside their windows, at suitable angles for commanding the doorstep, for a sight of callers, or for displaying a view of the street in general. Those are the spionen, or spy-glasses. They are by no means unknown in England, but they are so uncommon as to be remarked upon when seen. In Holland they are the customary accessory to a private house.

Leeuwarden has all its business importance and its dignity as of right, for it was the olden capital of Friesland, whence also the province of Groningen was governed; and on the Hofplein is yet the Royal Palace of the Stadtholders, now occupied by the Royal Commissary for Friesland. More striking than this, however, is the view of the town as you

come in from the Harlingen road, glimpsing as you do so the bold view of the Oldehove, a massive church-tower which seems to halt between being a military and an ecclesiastical work, and leans, very much out of plumb, to the right. Old houses at the foot of it, not humble of themselves, look miniatures by comparison, and the broad canal in the foreground, which was once the moat of the fortified town, and still irregularly encircling it, completes the picture. There is no church remaining of this sixteenth-century tower. The most beautiful secular building in the town is the Chancellerie, or, if you like, the Kanselary in the Turf Markt, built, strange to say, in the era of Spanish persecution, in 1566-71. It was the Court-of-Law of Friesland in those times ; but now houses the Provincial Library. It presents a long frontage of geranium-coloured red-brick alternating with bands of stone, and with one lofty gable of the like kind. Any architect from England gazing at it will perceive that from this elevation, more than from perhaps any other in Holland our own architects borrowed their craze of some forty-five years ago for what has been irreverently named the " blood-and-bandage " or " ham-sandwich " manner of alternating white stone and red brick.

In its " Friesch Museum " Leeuwarden has shown itself up-to-date in the proper modern spirit of seeking to preserve relics of old Friesland life and customs. In the " Hindelopen rooms " there, showing the olden bed-cupboards, the tiled walls and the



THE HINDELOOPEN ROOM IN THE FRIESCH MUSEUM, LEEUWARDEN.

painted furniture, you have some of the most fascinating of exhibits.

So in advance, in fact, is Leeuwarden that the great modern Roman Catholic church there is furnished almost completely with stained-glass windows done in Cubist art, that " last word " in colour and design. Cubism in painting is suspect, especially when it is practised by those who overstep the mark and descend into vorticism and all its worst eccentricities. Both the duffer who welcomes these new gospels because they seem to give an opportunity to incapacity, and the self-advertiser who sees a chance of becoming profitably notorious, find their account in them. But, hearing of those windows, I went to see them, expecting the worst—and remained to admire. All the windows in the body of the church are in the Cubist manner, while those in the chancel are modern stained-glass of the conventional type, wherein characterless, emasculated saints, pictured in anæmic colouring, simper in that sickly fashion we know so well. Whether you regard saints as divinely inspired personages or merely as persons of noble minds and deeds, they must have been forceful in character. The conventional modern stained-glass design denies them so much. But the saintly and divine beings shown in these recent Cubist windows at Leeuwarden are rough-hewn and virile, and the colouring is strong.

XXIV

THE name "Friesland" would seem to most Englishmen to indicate that this was an exceptionally cold country, especially as it is in the north. But it is the land of the Friesians, the "free people," who inhabited all these northern shores, extending over what is now the province of Groningen, and into Germany. They were a Germanic tribe; and first find mention in the pages of Tacitus. The sturdy independence of the Friesians was a feature of their character even in the times of the Romans, who never conquered them; and it survives to this day in the manners of the people, kindly, courteous, but self-reliant to an unusual degree. It is an agreeable mingling of characteristics to any stranger who is perhaps more used to the blunt and sometimes unpleasing independence of Yorkshire and Lancashire, not often easily to be distinguished from sheer rudeness.

The Friesian language, "Friesch," or "Friese," survives, and is still spoken. It is not merely a dialect, and a Hollander most often does not understand it. There is something of a parallel between England and Wales, for Friesland is no more Holland than Wales is England. There is much Norse in Friesch; and much, too, of what sounds English. In fact, there is a current rhyme:—

"Good butter and good cheese
Is good English and good Friese."

These Germanic-Norse folk warred with encroaching kings, became reluctantly converted from their grey Northern gods to Christianity, and in general in the seventh and eighth centuries put an end to all external schemes of overlordship until Charlemagne found a way to peace with them in the terms of a religious suzerainty. This saved his pride, and theirs. That red-bearded Charles the Great, like the forceful Romans, found himself unable to cope with these people. He specifically recognised them as free, and bound merely to render tithes to the Church. If the Friesians, however, had realised at the time that the Church had its temporal and political side, they perhaps would have been more suspicious than they were.

At any rate, in course of time they found themselves insidiously being controlled by the small semi-sovereigns under the rule of Emperors of Germany, and roughly put an end to it; establishing the "Sea-Lords" of the north. In 1256 the Friesians, resenting a German threat against their independence in the person of Count William of Holland, who had been elected German King, defeated and slew him; and thereafter carried on a struggle for nearly a hundred and fifty years before they lost West Friesland. How, on terms, they became part of the States-General of the Dutch Republic and finally

a part of the present Kingdom of the Netherlands, without losing their belief that they are "free Friesians" would be far too involved and complicated a matter to set forth in any work which was not a constitutional and political history. At any rate, the Frieslander still considers himself "a free man as long as the winds blow in the heavens and the

A DUTCH CLOTHES HORSE.

world shall continue to exist." I do not know what would happen if it should occur to the Frieslanders to establish themselves as a separate government and repudiate the authority of the rest of the Kingdom of Holland; whether this freedom would be acknowledged and respected.

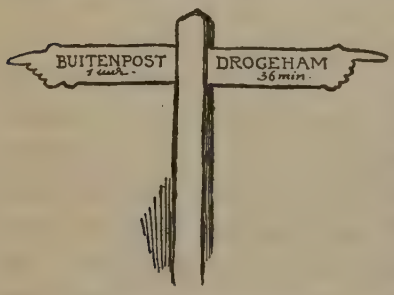
North of Leeuwarden you come in a few miles to the grey emptiness of the North Sea and the

equally empty yellowness of the sandy shore, where the grasses rustle and shiver in the strong breezes and seem to whisper tales of eld. So shall you come by Kornjum and Finkum, Hijum, Marrum and Ferwerd to Holwerd, where is the ferry across to Ameland Island. Or you may go by Stiens, whose name indicates that a Roman road came this way. Stiens church, exceptionally large, but for the rest, brother in absolute likeness to most other churches in these parts, stands on one of those terpen that are the usual feature of these villages. The terp, or heap of clay, heaped up by those remote settlers in these amphibious and inhospitable wastes, in times when civilisation was young, was the only sure ground—and that perhaps not always certain. There was the original "home," whose name is found embedded in the usual termination, "um," in most Friesland place-names. On those clay-heaps the first settlers had their primitive dwellings, and from them the villages stretched away as time wore on. Other terpen, now unoccupied either by church or village, are eagerly dug away and their clay sold by the ton, and at high prices, to mix with the hungry sands of less fertile regions. Almost any day you may see this work in progress; with perhaps some antiquary or scientific man, delegated by archæological or other societies, watching the diggers, lest something of antiquarian or scientific interest should be unearthed, as very often is the case. The kitchen-middens of prehistoric man, the refuse

of his poor little water-logged life, are dug up and sorted over. For what ultimate end did he live, who knows how many generations of him? Why, it would seem, for nothing more than that his sewage, his bones and offal should, in the fulness of time, become a desirable deposit of agricultural fertiliser.

XXV

And so en route for Groningen, along a brick-paved road which starts in promising fashion but soon becomes intrigued amid sands; fortunately not for long. We come by degrees out of the water-logged country, although not into anything but a flat region. The place-names on map and sign-posts are like the vain imaginings of nightmare, and as long as a goods-train, and on the map they often run, clanking, squeaking and thundering, into the next parish: Swaagwesteinde, Rinsumageest, Gaarkeuken, Kollumerswaag, Buitenpost, are some of the more modest among them. Hoary old sign-posts I saw, directing to those places in the patriarchal measure



AN OLD-FASHIONED SIGNPOST.

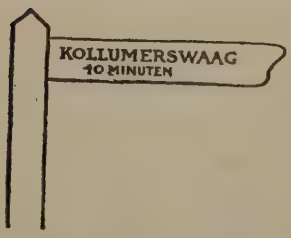
of time, by hours and minutes, rather than by miles or kilometres. Distance is calculated at the very leisurely pedestrian gait of three miles three furlongs to the hour—policeman's pace and a little bit over.

The country between Groningen and Leeuwarden is the very negation of the picturesque, and all the villages—and one is also disposed to say all the churches—are alike. Very grim dark grey-red brick-built churches, mostly with towers finished off with saddle-back roofs, and all with extremely primitive ideas of architectural adornment; sad, clumsy, almost fortress-like, they seem more suited for worship of the gloomy gods of the Norse mythology than for that of the Christian religion. Most of them date back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Such are the churches of Midwoulde and Stedum, respectively south-west and north-east of Groningen. But Stedum church is worth seeing, if only for the beautiful marble recumbent effigy of Adrian Clant, 1673, by Verhulst of Malines; a lovely specimen of the sculptor's art, while in Midwoulde church is the equally fine group of the Count and Countess of Inhausen. He died in 1664, and is represented lying asleep, while his wife is reclining on an elbow gazing at him.

Passing the level fields and the farm-houses, you cannot fail to notice both the notices, "Wacht u voor den Hond," and the very practical kind of wooden clothes-horse used in Holland for drying linen—a contrivance which gives more surface to

the air and should obviously be in use everywhere. But we seem to know nothing of it in England.

Groningen seems, from its position on the map, to be so very ultimate and out-of-the-way a place that it comes as a surprise to find it not merely a town of over 75,000 inhabitants, but by way of being rather a smart and fashionable town as well, and the seat of a University. It is a place of up-to-date shops alongside the out-of-date ones, and there is a general air of cleanliness and abundant prosperity. As you come up along the Heerenstraat and notice there the modistes, with Paris models in the windows, it becomes evident that Groningen is not out of the world to-day.



ANOTHER OLD-FASHIONED SIGNPOST.

But do not permit these remarks to give the idea that there is no picturesqueness in the town. There is the great lumpish, brick-built ancient Aa Kerk which does not greatly attract me ; and in the Groote Markt, surely one of the widest and roomiest of market-places in Holland, there rises the noble tower of St. Martin's church, to a height of 320 feet, dwarfing to insignificance everything else. From that lofty belfry ring the customary tinkling carillons. Humbly crouch the houses, themselves small only by comparison, beneath this monster tower of six stages. One of these houses is, however, really small in scale ;

THE GROOTE MARKT AND ST. MARTIN'S TOWER, GRONINGEN.

the little Guard house of 1509. Its window-shutters, painted in two colours, as customary throughout the country, disclose more vividly than elsewhere the origin of that fashion of painting; to resemble tied-back window-curtains.

Very noticeably is Groningen a Roman Catholic neighbourhood. Priests are common objects in the streets; and so are farmers, for this is a great grain-growing region. For the rest, it is a thriving, peaceful place and has not known war since the siege of 1672. There is an old house in the Ossen-Markt with an inscription dating back to disturbed old times, which indicates how weary they all were for peace and leave to go about their lawful occasions. "Godt geve dat hier in Vrede schrulen mach, en also ontgaen des werelts donder slach," That is — "God give that here in peace we may shelter from the thunderstorms of this world."

Well, they all have had that peace. The domestic architecture of Groningen shows it, in the many Baroque seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings, elaborately ornamented, of which that called the "Goudkantoor," built in 1635, is a prime example.

XXVI

EASTWARD of Groningen, another twenty miles or so, through Winschoten, see you on to the border of

Germany, at Nieuwe Schans, but we will turn south, entering the province of Drenthe at Vries. Drenthe is the region of the heaths. What the province of Groningen was, a hundred years ago, that, to a great degree, is Drenthe to-day. Not yet has the wild been tamed and brought under the plough. It is still the country of shaggy, tussocky gorse and bracken ; and it is the region of the " Hunnebedden," those groups of great stones which, according to some, are " graves of the Huns " ; or, according to the less imaginative, are merely the " graves of the dead."

Whatever may be the real significance of the name, there is but one explanation of the many scattered groups of these stones here, in a land that has no native stone. They are ice-borne granite boulders, brought here in the youth of the world, by glacial action, from Scandinavia. There are more than fifty groups of these alien stones in Drenthe ; the most famous, yet not quite the most spectacular, at Tijnarloo. Many of these collections by the long-exhausted forces of nature are now protected ; a care that, merely a generation ago, would have seemed absurd, because not then had travel and good roads made them so readily accessible as they are now. But to-day any motorist can come to them. Not now would it be possible to write, conscientiously, of weird and uncertain, perhaps even hazardous, approaches over the heaths, to find eventually, after difficulties and exhaustions,

those lone stones, brooding enigmatically upon the landscape and thrilling you with a sense of their remoteness, alike in time and geographical distance. No, not that. They thrill me, it is true, but in a different sensory chord. There is something just as piquant—although of a different piquancy—in observing a party of motorists patronising the immemorially ancient as there is in attuning one's self to the infinite by coming to it in solitude and by way of uncertainties and hazards.

"Protected," yes. The "Hunnebedden," or "giants' graves," as sometimes they are named by the peasantry, are scheduled by the Government and duly labelled "Rijks Eigendom": that is to say, "State Property." Those notices rather take them out of the category of the wild, the mysterious and the unexpected and place them in that of specimens in a museum. By so much they have lost something, it is true, of their olden lure. So did I turn aside at Vries to find the stones of Tijnarloo, and come, later, through Assen, a little town amid the woods, and capital of Drenthe, to a road leading eastwards to Rolde, where there is a "hunnebed" of thirty-two stones, piled up under the tortured branches of two haggard gnarled oaks. The mossy boulders and the bleached lichened trunks of those trees were entirely in keeping with what we like to think the mystery of those survivals from a time when history had not begun. Nature has well stage-managed at Rolde.

Of course, while those primeval forces brought here these stones, mankind collected the far-strewn individual ones and brought them into these groups. You perceive that, readily enough in the disposition of them, and in the arrangement by which some form supports for a capstone, constituting what we call "cromlechs." The stones of Tijnarloo are more in

ONE OF THE HUNNEBEDDEN, ROLDE.

the nature of cromlechs than are those of Rolde. Evidence for the existence of the "Huns," whose graves these stones may cover, is not lacking, although it be the vague sort found in ancient sagas. Ancient personal ornaments have been found here by diligent antiquaries; but, as the vikings, the rovers of old and the "Huns" burnt the bodies of their

A DUTCH COUNTRY SCENE: ROAD AND CANAL.

dead, nothing more has come to light. But Drenthe, this heathland province, was, it seems, a part of those regions that anciently were styled "Hunaland," and peopled by folk of Germanic and Scandinavian race. Indeed, if we may accept the derivation of the name of "Drenthe" from Dronthjen, in Norway, it would seem that they were mostly Scandinavians, who "wanted their place in the sun," and very reasonably came south to find it. Unhappily for all concerned, there were already in possession, sunning themselves in this perhaps not remarkably warm climate, people who resented this incursion. Then, as we have in recent years observed, rather acutely, there was trouble. By the evidence of these "Hunnebedden" very much trouble, for these relics seem to indicate that this was a vast battle-ground. The presumption remains that, in spite of the Hun chieftains losing so many of their number, these strangers out from the north succeeded in establishing themselves. The "Hunnebedden" themselves would seem to prove that, for if the invaded peoples had proved victorious, they would scarcely have troubled to collect these stones as memorials to the fallen among the enemy. So I think the northerners secured their place in the sun, and that the defeated folk very largely went west and south-west, and found a place in the mud and water of what is now the essential Holland.

Drenthe is not only the province of heaths, but

also of ancient oaks and much woodland. Vries itself is almost embowered amid trees, and it is not characteristically a Dutch place. Nor have we here, as in other parts, the canals as such an inevitable feature. It is true that there are canals as main lines of communication, such as the Drentsche Hoofd-vaart and the Nord Willems Canal, but you do not find in the towns and villages that preference, or perhaps that necessity, for a canal before a street which is the feature elsewhere.

But wherever a canal runs beside a public road, sooner or later there will be seen a board with the one word " strijk " on it in prominent letters. This, pronounced "strake," is an injunction to skippers on canal boats to strike their sails, for fear of alarming horses. That notice, and the one with the word " Rijwielpad," meaning " Cyclists' Path," are features of the road throughout Holland.

XXVII

I DO not cherish any warmth of feeling for that road which runs alongside the Drentsche Hoofd-vaart, on to Meppel. It is, *quâ* road, not bad, but there is more than a thought too much Smilde : miles of it ; an unending, unprepossessing, draggle-tailed village ; rather a bargee sort of out-at-elbows pig-keeping and goat-harbouring place. I thought of that old

rhyme, "As I was going to St. Ives," for the way was processional with many women, a proportionably small number of men, and infinite pigs. In the St. Ives rhyme "each wife had a cat, and each cat had a kit." Here everyone, who was not driving a lean cow, or chasing a goat, was herding porkers. That is Drenthe! heaths, Hunnebedden, rather squalid cottages, and swine. Meppel, at the termination of all this phantasmagoria and also at the end of Drenthe, is the capital, not of the province, but of all this agricultural business; and there is not much to say of it but just that. But the purple heaths are beautiful. To them the bees—for Drenthe is a great bee-keeping district—are taken when the heather is in bloom. The hives are taken by trekschuit and cart to those honey-bearing wilds and placed there for that season. We in England owe a good deal in these last years to the Dutch bee-keeper, for when the so-called "Isle of Wight disease" attacked the English bees and almost wholly depopulated our own hives, the importation of Dutch queens, immune from the infection, saved the situation.

It is well worth while to explore into those heaths, eastward of Meppel, coming, say to Hoogeveen, whose name means, literally, "high meadows." Many of the places here are "veens." At Hoogeveen, if you come to it on a Sunday, the Protestant community will be heard invited to church by tuck of drum, instead of by bell-ringing. There is an "Enge-

land " village in this neighbourhood ; one of the many similar names, including " Engelum," near Leeuwarden, which hint to us, not obscurely, that some of our ancestors derived from this country ; a conclusion that may be arrived at from another point of view, that of language. For while it is true that the Dutch speech is often entirely beyond a casual Englishman's comprehension, yet occasionally you get identical phrases ; such as " Waar is de bel ? " " Wat is der nieuws ? " " Wat kost het ? " " Hij is mijn vriend," or "mijn beste vriend" or " boezen vriend." They need no translation. In other instances the parallels are with an older English than now we use. A Hollander using the expression " for ever " will say " veer altijd "— for all tide. That is poetic, but the name " winkel," for " shop " is to English ears, merely funny. When you see an advertisement of a " roode winkel," you know it means a " red shop," but, at the same

THE STAPHORST COSTUME.

time, it provokes a smile. To those same ears the Dutch name for a stud-farm is an abomination, and I do not propose, therefore, to print it.

The most astonishing place in this region is Staphorst. It has a railway-station; it is on the main road for Zwolle and so not out of touch, geographically, with the world; but it remains as exclusive and as peculiar in its habits and costumes as at any time it was.

Here the children wear an invariable costume of red and blue; the girls up to six years with a round furry cap. After that age, they have the very peculiar head-dress of the district: a parti-coloured lofty affair in shape something between a horn and a jester's tall cap. They look in silhouette at some distance like the strange animals we read of that inhabited the world before geological conditions had quite settled down. The Staphorsters know quite well that the world thinks their style peculiar; but while they cling to it, they resent being noticed, and violently refuse, as a rule, to be sketched or photographed. They are an aloof and surly people; mostly of agricultural, and especially of horse-breeding occupations. Their horses look almost (not quite, for that would be impossible) as peculiar as themselves; tall, lanky steeds, thin in the flanks and long in the leg.

This is the province of Overyssel. The river Yssel, which gives it the name, runs into the Zuider Zee past Zwolle and Kampen. I came through

Meppel and Zwartesluis and sleepy Hasselt into Zwolle, which, although near the Yssel, is actually on the Zwartewater. It is a quiet, prim town, by no means fulfilling the picturesque promise of its queer name. There are the two great churches of St. Michael and of Our Lady, the one remaining town gate, the Sassenpoort with its bulk of four towers, the Stadhuis, and the Melk-Markt, where pretty Dutch girls in white starched frilly things sell milk from little carts and vessels so brightly polished that they make you blink. For the rest, there are gardens and walks where the ramparts used to be, and Zwolle is now residential and not at all in love with mediævalism.

XXVIII

Kampen is just the opposite kind of place. You will like Kampen, for although it is not smart, nor rich, nor a garden-city, like Zwolle, it is far more picturesque, and it is an appealing kind of place. You feel towards it as you do to a stray dog, and would if you could do so pat it on the head and say "Poor old Kampen!" There is no doubt of its extreme antiquity, for the name is of Roman origin. To-day it is not Roman but mediæval in almost its every circumstance. A friendly middle-ages afterglow of its good old days pervades the town. There you

come through the archway of the Korenmarkt Poort, with its portly white-washed towers, or through those other gates, those of the Cellebroeders, the Broeders and the Haghenpoort, into a fisher-town that was very great in its way. To-day it is a museum of antiquities. The Stadhuis dates from the fifteenth century, and is full of grim old things. Not more grim, for that hardly could be, than the iron cage suspended outside from the coquettish old tower which succeeds in the difficult feat of leaning two ways at once. The cage was for the public exhibition of condemned malefactors who had received their sentences within, in that dark oak-panelled hall of justice which must be, I think, most dramatic among all such tribunals. For that hall is divided into two parts by a screen. On this side, let us picture the public, the accused and his counsel; and on that we imagine the judges as they sat, invisible, to try the cases. The screen was actually and visibly what we style in our legal phraseology "the Bar." The unknown and the invisible are ever the most daunting; and to face that unseen Bench and address it and hear its pronouncements must have been a severe ordeal alike for counsel and accused. More favoured than the folk of those times, we may pass through this screen and see the ten elaborate stalls in which those dispensers of justice sat, with a huge sculptured chimney-piece to keep them up to the mark as magistrates; sculptures, including that representing the Judgment

of Solomon, inciting them to be just and spare not.

Kampen is the Gotham of Holland. The men of Gotham (which may be the one in Nottinghamshire or the other in Sussex, but both share the legend), were the idiots who were capable of any foolish

TAKING TOLL ON A CANAL.

thing. All Holland knows that Kampen has the like reputation ; and " Kampen uyen," that is to say " Kampen jokes," literally. " Kampen onions," are famous.

There is always a new joke about Kampen, but they cannot improve on the old ones. No one has ever bettered the alleged resolution of the town

council following on a discussion about the inefficiency of the fire-engines. They resolved "that on the evening preceding a fire" all the appliances must be overhauled. The "wise men of Gotham" are accused of building a wall to keep in the swallow, and so preserve the summer; and the town council of Kampen are said to have roofed in a sundial to keep it from the sun's rays.

Almost the quaintest object I saw by the canal-side out of Kampen was an extremely fat woman (not that in Holland this would be strange), who seemed to be angling, and angling awkwardly. A closer approach showed that what looked like fishing with rod and line was really an ingenious way of collecting toll from a vessel below, by the aid of a wooden shoe.

From Kampen to Deventer I came by Wezep, Heerde, and Veesen, crossing the Yssel by ferry; and so past the busy brickfields of Olst which, in the way of brickfields, smelt rather much. The Yssel is a noble river, far broader and finer somehow, than one expected to find it; with long strings of barges navigating it, and steamers. "Deventer Koek," famous as a local delicacy throughout Holland, is a ginger-bread cake by no means so individual as might be supposed, nor so good. Rather tough and rubbery, like the similar "Koek" of Groningen.

Deventer sits stately by the Yssel, here crossed by a wooden bridge; the tower of St. Lebuinus'

church presiding over all other towers, spires, roofs and gables whatsoever. A very sober and sedate tower, too, it is for Holland, crested with a dome, and in outline not unlike a small and less ornate version of that of the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster. The ways of old Deventer with its malefactors were truly forthright and thorough, as would appear from an ancient copper cauldron suspended outside the weigh-house. Counterfeiters of coin were boiled.

South of Deventer the towers of Zutphen soon appear. This is Gelderland, the next hilliest province in Holland to that of Limburg. It is a surprise to find in the Netherlands any kind of hills, and in truth these are not great. But the scenery is beautiful and in parts park-like. It is that region of the country which, like our own English county of Surrey, is the home chosen by the wealthier and more leisured classes. Here the planter from Java or Sumatra, or other parts of the Dutch East Indies, loves to establish himself on the land, in some ornate country house. I do not know how these folk hit it off with the ancient families of Gueldres, who are not all gone yet, and are proud though not wealthy ; for in modern Holland, as in modern anywhere, it is the trader of to-day who has the wealth, while the ancient families decline. Parts of Gelderland are, it is true, heath. That is the region called the " Veluwe," *i.e.*, the barren. The ancient rhyme of Gelderland is a proud one :—

ZUTPHEN'S SKYLINE: "THE LAST ENCHANTMENTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES."

"Hoog van moed
Klein van goed,
Een zwaard in t'hand,
Is t'wapen van Gelderland."

That is to say:—

"In courage high,
Of small estate, but good;
With sword in hand,
The arms of Gelderland."

Zutphen's skyline, with its many towers and spires rising up like a collection of architectural examples in an exhibition, rather than the bona-fide belongings of any one town, more nearly realises one of Dürer's engravings or Hollar's etchings than the view of any other place I know. More than Oxford in Matthew Arnold's phrase, does Zutphen "whisper from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages"; just as her history records the last bloody doings of the mediæval wars and the hellish ferocity of the Spaniards at the capture of the town in 1572. The name of Zutphen is familiar to Englishmen, by reason of the battle of that name, fought in 1586, by the English against the Spaniards; that battle in which Sir Philip Sidney was mortally wounded. The battlefield was actually at Warnsveld, outside the town to the north-east.

The Wynhuis tower is tall, but that of the Groote Kerk, otherwise St. Walpurgis, is taller, and more portly and domineering beside the Wynhuis,

The church of St. Walpurgis has an ancient and darkling library with a stone-groined roof. It was once the chapter-house. On the tiled floor you see—for you are shown it with must gusto—the print of a cloven hoof. The story belonging to it is that of a monk in mediæval times, when such things could be. He had vowed to fast, and had come to that stage when food seemed very desirable indeed. Entered then to him the Devil, with some extremely appetising dishes. The monk fell from grace and ate; and the Devil, according to the best advices, made off with him, leaving this solitary hoof-print as a guarantee of the truth of the story.

Residential Guelderland is plentifully evident along the road from Zutphen to Arnhem. It is a lovely road, made glorious by the beech-avenues that stretch away for miles. From Spankeren you come to the cross-roads of the Middachten Allée. Here, in every direction, the beeches, of a great height, seem to go on to infinity. Count Bentinck's country-seat of Middachten stands in the woods, away to the right.

I took my ease at Dieren, at the "Kroon"; and I met an affable person there. Not that the conversation opened auspiciously. As with all Dutchmen, the sight of an Englishman led him to be polite and to talk English—of sorts. He began, by way of endearing himself, by saying that, unlike most of his countrymen, he loved "beastly things." This created at once an atmosphere which would have

been not altogether pleasant if it had not been obvious that he was a sportsman, and meant that he loved animals. Even if it were not for his gun, his dress would have proclaimed his sporting predilections, for in Holland, as a sportsman, you dress the part. He loved animals and birds so much that he was happiest when out to kill them. That it is to be a sportsman, in every country, I am sorry to say. He accompanied me a little way, talking about the conditions of sport in Holland. There were not many "sportmen," it appeared, in that country. As he said it, he espied a snipe sitting on a gate, happy perhaps in the consciousness of this not being a sporting country, and thinking himself safe. My lover of nature levelled his gun, and, giving him both barrels, blew him to bits. I pointed out that this was sheer destruction, and that in sporting England we would shoot birds on the wing, and not sitting; nor would we blast them into fragments. He seemed to think the doing of such a thing as shooting a bird in flight an achievement incredibly difficult, and, scenting disapproval, got a good deal less amiable. So I left him, meditating, no doubt, more of what I call murder, and recovered my spirits in the grateful presence of those murmuring avenues of beeches, mounting so loftily, with white billows of sky amid the blue seeming to scrape the summits of them, and came through suburban Velp into Arnhem.

Arnhem is seated on the Rhine, just below the

confluence of the Yssel with it. With some surprise, for they are strange after the flatness of the rest of the country, you see, indubitably, hills. Not great hills, but gently rolling downs, well wooded. Such are the surroundings of modish and well-to-do Arnhem, that town and district of all Holland where the wealthy merchant and the retired Dutch East Indies planter love to reside and play the country gentleman. The woods all around make it beautiful, the Rhine confers stateliness, the social life gives it a continental, international, rather opulent gaiety. For the rest, it is not quaint nor old-world in general. Neat and pretty suburbs spread out, and country houses in their own wooded grounds make the northern side of Arnhem rather like a better Tunbridge Wells. It is in itself a delightful centre, but it is not the Holland of old-world ways the inquisitive stranger comes to see. Nor exactly is Utrecht, with its electric tramways, that Holland. So, having quartered the country where the antique and the curious is the usual, I here bring these pages to an end; quite conscious that there is sufficient material for another volume quite as large as this for he who wishes to go and produce it.

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